



TEENAGERS AND TOYBOYS

Deborah Moggach on love, guilt and splitting up

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The verdict on Jack Nicholson

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SECTION 3

50 sign motion seeking review of role

Labour MPs call Irvine before them

By Jill Sherman and James Landale

LORD IRVINE of Lairg has been called to make an unprecedented appearance before Labour MPs amid growing anger at his behaviour and what is seen as excessive power.

The decision comes as Labour backbenchers are becoming increasingly concerned about the Lord Chancellor's political judgement and the £650,000 refurbishment of his official residence. It also coincides with a Commons resolution tabled by fifty Labour MPs which calls for the Lord Chancellor to be stripped of his powerful role.

The motion urges the Prime Minister to create a new Justice Department headed by an elected Cabinet minister accountable to the Commons, and suggests that Lord Irvine's key position on nine Cabinet committees should be reviewed.

The move to call Lord Irvine to speak to the Parliamentary Labour Party has been sparked by increasing resentment among backbenchers about the Lord Chancellor's "lack of political judgement".

Although MPs denied that the Commons motion was a personal attack on Lord Irvine, it was evident that it was a further attempt to undermine him.



I'm going to have to put you on hold. Mr Prescott, I have the Lord Chancellor on the other line.

Mr Blair meets the Prime Minister on a regular basis to express backbench concerns and while any invitation would come from him, it is likely to have the Prime Minister's blessing.

MPs and ministers have little criticism about Lord Irvine's ability to carry out his job. But there is increasing anxiety about his lack of political skills and his extensive power base.

Five of the nine rooms of the Lord Chancellor's residence will be open to the public, it was disclosed last night. Geoff Hoon, minister for the Lord Chancellor's Department, said in a Commons written reply that the dining room, drawing room, principal bedroom and the River Room together with the study annex would be open.

Selected groups of the public will be allowed to visit the residence to view the more than 100 publicly-owned paintings which have been loaned from galleries across the country.



Theresa Harrild leaves the tribunal after her victory. She is to be awarded damages against the ECB

Sacked woman wins at Lord's

By Kathryn Knight and Peter Foster

ENGLISH cricket chiefs paid a receptionist at Lord's to have an abortion after she became pregnant by a high-flying colleague and then dismissed her anyway, an industrial tribunal was told yesterday.

Theresa Harrild said that she had been given the £400 cash in a brown envelope after an interview with Tim Lamb, the chief executive, who had said he would "have a word" with the finance director Cliff Barker.

Miss Harrild suffered depression after the operation and twice attempted suicide, the Central London tribunal was told. But in spite of assurances that her job was safe, she was dismissed by Mr Barker on a visit to her home during which he made a pass at her.



Cricketing executives Tim Lamb and Cliff Barker

she told her supervisor who in turn told members of the board. In January 1997, she was summoned to Mr Lamb's office.

Over the next few days, she said, she was put under increasing pressure to make up her mind to have an abortion.

Continued on page 2, col 8

Prisoners on drugs to suffer 'closed visits'

By Richard Ford Home Correspondent

PRISONERS caught using drugs will be barred automatically from physical contact with their families and friends during visits under Prison Service proposals.

Up to 15,000 prisoners a year are found using drugs and they would be separated from their wives, girlfriends and children by a glass screen through which they can talk but not touch.

Closed-circuit television is also to be extended to visits areas in another 100 jails and more dogs are to be used in a drive to reduce the amount of drugs entering prisons.

The proposals in the review were disclosed to The Times as recommitments broke out between the Prison Service and Sir David Ramsbotham, Chief Inspector of Prisons, over his claim that up to ten drug barons operated in every jail.

Richard Tilt, Director-General of the Prison Service, accused Sir David of being unfair because during the past three years the service had introduced programmes to tackle drug abuse, including improved surveillance and mandatory drug testing.

Leading article, page 23

Smoking curbs

The Government is to support a voluntary ban on smoking in public places after receiving evidence from an independent scientific committee that confirms a clear link between passive smoking and cancer or heart disease.

Chinese dissident attacks 'two-faced' Robin Cook

By Michael Binyon and Philip Webster

A LEADING Chinese dissident accused Robin Cook of being "two-faced" in the Foreign Office of a "scandalous" decision yesterday.

Mr Hague said that for the first time in nine years Britain would not support a resolution criticising China at the annual United Nations Human Rights Commission.

no one had gone to this depth to receive him and public opinion. "This was a deliberate attempt to minimise exposure" to embarrassing questions.

The Foreign Office said in a statement that Mr Cook had a friendly meeting with Mr Wei and had expressed Britain's continuing concern on human rights in China and the European Union's agreed position.

showing modest signs of improvement. The spokesman denied that there had been any attempt to keep journalists from Mr Wei.

Mr Cook said it was a case of engagement and practical assistance on the ground in China. He said the decision not to support the resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights applied to the

EU battery hens get more living space

From Charles Bremner in Brussels

EUROPEAN battery hens will be guaranteed almost double their present minimum space under a law proposed by the EU Commission yesterday.

More than 90 per cent of the EU's 270 million laying hens are kept in battery cages. The Commission said there was clear evidence of poor welfare for such hens, but it recognised that alternative housing led to "higher parasitic infection, feather-pecking and cannibalism, which makes beak-trimming necessary".

New rules would also govern temperature, lighting and ventilation. Further studies would be undertaken with a view to phasing out housing systems in the second half of the next decade, the Commission said.

Last night the RSPCA welcomed the EU proposals, but called for cages to be banned outright. Outlawing conventional-sized cages after 2009 was a "step in the right direction", it said, but argued that the move should happen sooner.

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Bell enters the din of a phoney Commons war to call for ceasefire

Warily, like the front-line war correspondent he once was, Martin Bell (Tatton) is proving there is a role for an Independent in the Commons. His intervention over Kosovo on Tuesday, questioning the whole theory of economic sanctions, would have been hard for a loyal Conservative or Liberal Democrat to ask, and impossible for a loyal supporter of a Labour Government. Yesterday Mr Bell scored again with a strike for which any team-player would have been disciplined by his

team captain. But Bell is his own team captain. The House had just endured a particularly silly half-hour of Prime Minister's Questions. Tony Blair was in one of his "and sucks to you!" moods, strutting edgily around the questions and forced by William Hague to go back as far as the poll tax for his cheer. Mr Hague began further from home: with a mystifying call for government support for a United Nations resolution on human rights in China. Confused to hear this from a Tory rather than the World

Conscience section of the Labour Party, Mr Blair seemed stumped. Hague's supporters looked stumped too: why was their leader asking about human rights? Presumably "China" was code for "Rupert Murdoch" which was code for "New Labour". The linkage escaped many. But not Paddy Ashdown, who urged Blair to determine whether *The Times* was suppressing reports from its former East Asia editor, Jonathan Mirsky, and in breach of obligations of "editorial independence". Blair astonished

MPs by saying he knew nothing of this. He was more forgivably baffled by an MP whose previous employment in the Conservative Research Department casts doubt on everything that once-proud institution has advised in recent decades. That Dr Julian Lewis was elected for the New Forest suggests the wild po-

etry must have been enfranchised. He queried the Companion of Honour for "a lifelong Communist who just happens to be the father of the business partner of the girlfriend of the Chancellor of the Exchequer". Mr Blair said he was reminded that Lewis had once been a member of the Labour Party. Hm. What was it about

Lewis that reminded him? It told us more about Mr Blair than he intended. An MP Madam Speaker called "Mr Hilton" - Labour's Hilton Dawson (Lancaster & Wyre) - or was it Dawson Lancaster (Wyre & Hilton)? - enlisted the Prime Minister's sympathy for *Hansard* reporters who sat up 'till Monday night to record the "excruciating banality" of Tory MPs resisting the Minimum Wage Bill. The House roared sympathy for *Hansard* reporters generally. I glanced at two on duty.

The first was as unmoved as one of those rock-hewn heads on Mount Rushmore. The other's normally sphinx-like expression of marbled inactivity was briefly tugged by the ghost of what, in mere flesh-and-blood, we would call a sad little smile. A *Stepford* person on the Labour benches asked the Prime Minister the kind of question which - just when you think some limit has been reached to the shamelessness with which a backbencher can creep - smashes straight through it and oils her way

onward and downward to a new low. It is not even worth naming these *Stepford* people any more. They have no idea. That was almost Martin Bell's point. He rose just before the session concluded. Could we have a whip's ceasefire, he asked - an end to planted questions? I think Mr Blair's categorical denial that his backbenchers were ever 'sat upon' was tongue-in-cheek. I think he did not expect us to believe such ardent nonsense. I just wish I were entirely sure.



POLITICAL SKETCH

Irish pubs angry at curb on late drinks

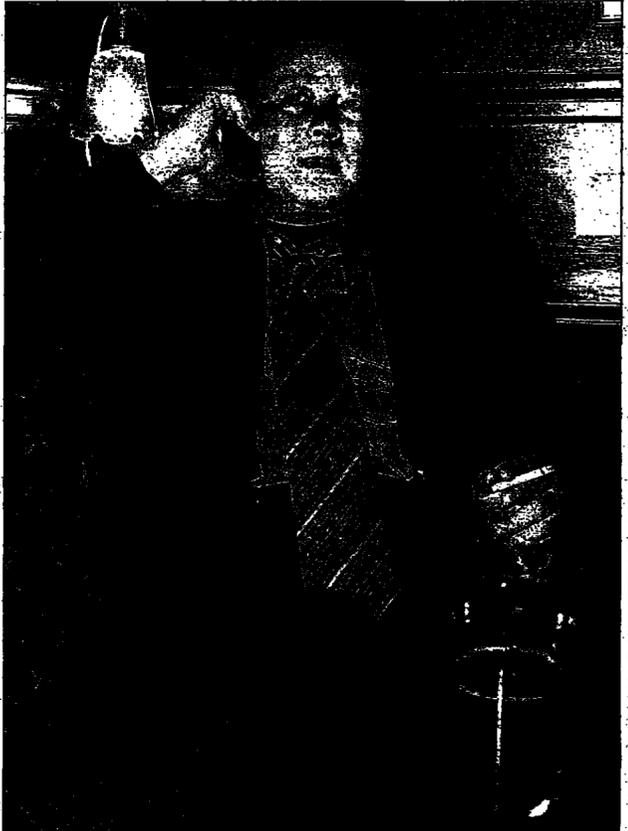
RURAL Ireland is in revolt at a police clampdown on late-night drinking in the west of the country. Acting on instructions from the Justice Minister, Irish police are targeting pubs in Galway, Roscommon, Clare and Mayo, demanding that drinks are locked away and customers sent home by 11.30pm. The move has provoked fury in pubs across the country. Up to 20,000 publicans and their families are threatening to withhold tax payments and march on the Dail if the clampdown continues or is extended elsewhere. The Vintners' Federation of Ireland accused the Government of picking on rural Ireland to test out its "zero tolerance" on crime policy, while affluent Dublin remained untouched. He said his members were determined that pubs should stay open to lam. Paul O'Grady, president of the federation, said: "The Vintners' position is that they would like to be able to sell drink when the customers want drink, that is up to lam, at least over weekend nights. It would be disastrous if the current emphasis on the licensing laws pertained." Traditionally, rural police have turned a blind eye to late drinking.

NHS pays £19m for system that will save £1.9m

THE NHS has spent £19 million setting up a computer coding system that will save only £1.9 million over a decade if it can be made to work, according to a report today by the National Audit Office. The system, devised by James Read, a GP in Loughborough, is for recording and analysing symptoms, diagnoses and treatments for use in computerised clinical information systems. It is currently on trial in 12 hospitals, 11 having dropped out of the pilot project. The codes are not in widespread use in the NHS, even though the audit office report says they were supposed to be "vitaly important" for the service. Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, says: "Our report has revealed serious problems... following the purchase of the copyright to the Read Codes by the NHS, and substantial weaknesses in the management." Dr Read was paid £1.25 million for the copyright of the codes in 1990 and was then kept on as the director of the NHS centre set up to develop them for the NHS computer system. His company, Computer Aided Medical Systems (CAMS), has exclusive rights of distribution to the NHS and provides support for the codes developed by the centre. "This meant that Dr Read was employed by the NHS to

Audit Office finds serious problems in 'vital' codes, reports Ian Murray

that in effect double payments were being made from NHS funds in respect of the car," the report states. It adds: "Money received in this way has been repaid to CAMS." The audit office also found that although the centre's staff were meant to travel to work and pay their own costs, 12 were classified as home based, which meant they could charge travel expenses to visit the centre. The report calls for an urgent independent evaluation of the codes and asks the NHS Executive to carry out a rigorous cost benefit analysis before approving them. Rhodri Morgan, MP for Cardiff West and chairman of the Public Administration Select Committee, said last night that he would be tabling questions in the Commons calling for an objective evaluation to ensure that "we don't go on throwing good money after bad." He said he had visited Withey Bush Hospital in Haveringwest, where one of the pilot schemes was going on. He had been impressed not by the code but by the skill of the computer operators. "This system is meant to be easily accessible or it would be useless, and yet it only seems to function if you can find incredibly dedicated and skilled people who know how to make it work," he said.



Wei Jingsheng in a Westminster bar yesterday: he denounced Robin Cook as "two-faced"

Blair defends record on human rights in China

Continued from page 1 forthcoming meeting only the EU would keep its policy under review. Mr Hague seized on the meeting in the Commons. He told Mr Blair that Mr Wei found the Government's position "stupefying". Mr Blair insisted that Labour's position on human rights had not changed since before the election. "We have on many occasions made clear our position on human rights and we have carried on making that position clear and will carry on doing so. "It is not right to say we have not raised the issue of human rights in China. We have done so continually and we have done so both on our own account and as the President of the EU." Government sources said that in the past Britain had sponsored the motion, but that it had never been passed. This time several European countries opposed it and because of the failure to reach a European consensus Britain, as President of the EU, decided not to press it.

Lord Thomson of Monifieth, a former chairman of the Independent Broadcasting Authority, last night attacked alleged "grotesque anomalies" in tax treatment of commercial broadcasters, which he said discriminated in favour of BSkyB, an associate company of News International, owner of *The Times*. He said ITV companies were paying £400 million a year "over and above normal business taxation". In another Commons intervention Paddy Ashdown, the Liberal Democrat leader, challenged Mr Blair over the editorial independence of *The Times*. The exchanges came after criticism was levelled at the newspaper by its former East Asia editor Jonathan Mirsky, who claimed that *The Times* had decided not to cover China in a "serious way" because of Rupert Murdoch's business interests there. On Monday the board of Times Newspapers Holdings

Ltd gave a unanimous vote of confidence in Peter Stothard, the Editor of *The Times*, over the paper's coverage of China and Hong Kong. In the Commons Mr Ashdown said that when Mr Murdoch sought to purchase *The Times* the then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, John Biffen, agreed to that purchase without reference to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission on the grounds of eight conditions to preserve editorial independence. He asked whether Mr Blair accepted that gave the Government a continuing responsibility to ensure that those conditions are properly upheld. Mr Blair said: "Of course I accept that any conditions entered into should be upheld." Margaret Beckett, the President of the Board of Trade, has yet to reply to Mr Ashdown's call for a review of the decision not to refer Mr Murdoch's media ownership to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission but officials have indicated that such a move is unlikely.

Cricketing chiefs 'paid for secretary's abortion'

Continued from page 1 "Eventually I decided to have a termination because of the pressure. Cliff Barker said he would give me money for the termination and then slyly said I could pay it back out of my wages at £50 a month." On January 31, Miss Harrild checked into a London hotel and a fellow employee gave her a brown envelope containing £400 to pay for the abortion at a nearby clinic. She returned to work but started to suffer from severe depression. By April she was unable to cope and took an overdose of antidepressants, leading to an overnight stay in a Brighton hospital. She returned to work the next day to be told by her supervisor to "pull herself together". She was later found in a park having taken an overdose of paracetamol tablets and was taken to hospital with serious liver damage. Miss Harrild said that she was assured that her job was safe and senior colleagues visited her at home to check on her condition - but she was later told that the visits were an informal disciplinary hearing and in June Mr Barker went to her home to tell her she was being dismissed. "I told him: 'This is all bollocks, Cliff and he said 'Yes I know. But I replied: 'I've done nothing wrong.'" She said he had then told her she would receive £1,000 and she had told him she did not want handouts. "He said: 'Don't be a silly girl. There will be more if you are a good girl.' I said: 'Cliff I am 30 years old, I am not a girl!'" Mr Barker had then told her that cricket was "a bloke's world and not a place for girls". He had then made a sexual pass at her before her 14-year-old son, who had been listening outside, came in and asked Mr Barker to leave. The English Cricket Board, which was criticised for failing to attend the hearing, later rejected Miss Harrild's account saying: "The culture of the ECB bears no resemblance to the description put forward in the tribunal. This is a new organisation which is committed to delivering equality across the game. It is preposterous to suggest that the kind of culture portrayed would exist." The board also said that it was "astounded" that Miss Harrild had "exploited the public forum of the tribunal" when the matter could have been privately settled. The ECB believed that nothing could be gained by either side by such a public debate, "for this reason the ECB declined to attend the tribunal."

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Prescott deals inquiry begins

By NICHOLAS WATT, DOMINIC KENNEDY AND STEPHEN FARRELL

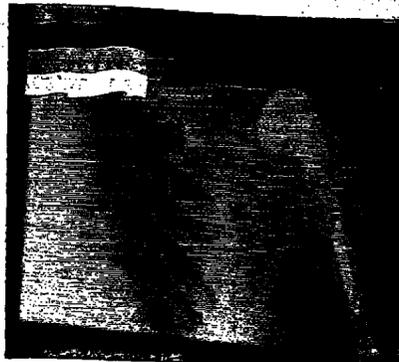
THE audit team ordered by John Prescott to investigate a property deal involving his son got to work in Hull yesterday. Three auditors from the Environment Department, which is headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, will be examining the deal in which former council houses were sold to Wyke Property Services run by Simon Cutting, a business partner of Mr Prescott's son Jonathan, for an average price of £5,300 each. The houses have been valued by some developers in Hull at £20,000. Mr Prescott Jr, 34, said yesterday that he felt drained by what he claimed had been a campaign run by two self-styled researchers into his business affairs with the intention of undermining his father. A 42-year-old man was released on police bail after being arrested in connection with a burglary. Inspector Steve Love of Humber-side

with someone whose name is Prescott. The executive committee of Mr Prescott's East Hull Labour Party announced yesterday that members had moved a unanimous vote of confidence in the Deputy Prime Minister at a meeting on Tuesday night. Harry Woodford, Mr Prescott's agent, said: "There are no problems, no problems at all." Mr Prescott's allies claim he is the victim of internal party feuding. The bitterness against him is part of a

backlash by whistleblowers who spent years asking the national Labour Party to clean up the city, only to find themselves victims of a cull by officials. Those who brought evidence of alleged gerrymandering, corruption and nepotism to an inquiry into the city's affairs have been rejected as unsuitable to stand as candidates in the May local elections. One of the incidents involved a bizarre mass join-up of the Labour Party by rugby club associates and relatives of Mr Prescott's ally John Black, a councillor who tried to oust Stuart Randall as MP for Hull West. Research Systems Ltd, which has been asked to make it clear that the London-based research and IT company, Research Systems Ltd, is in no way connected with the two researchers linked to an organisation called "Research Systems" referred to in our front-page story of March 10 concerning John Prescott and the suspected vendetta against him.

Handwritten signatures and notes at the bottom of the page.

Meet Bionic Bridget - a walking European Union



Re-made in Europe: X-rays show the artificial parts bought from Germany, Spain and Sweden by the Portuguese surgeons. Mrs Fullerton is recovering well

By DANIEL MCGROVER

SHE is the embodiment of European medical prowess. After Bridget Fullerton fell 80ft from her apartment balcony, surgeons patched her body together with artificial parts from Germany, Spain, Sweden and Britain.

Mrs Fullerton was reconstructed with titanium, nylon and stainless steel and enough bolts and screws to set off alarms whenever she goes through an airport security check or leaves a department store.

"I must be the ultimate European citizen with so many bits from so many places," the Irish-born businesswoman said last night. "I'm not sure how much of the original Irish woman is left."

Mrs Fullerton, 52, was not expected to live after her fall at her home in Portugal. She lay in a coma for three weeks with two broken legs, a fractured skull and pelvis, a broken shoulder blade, shattered left hip,

Surgeons shopped around when they rebuilt Briton after fall

paralysis in her left foot and broken ribs.

In 13 lengthy operations at the Proclada Hospital in Porto, surgeons first replaced her left shoulder with titanium parts from Nottingham and Germany. Then her left hip was replaced with components in high density polyethylene and titanium from Sweden and her right femur has an L-shaped bracket plate in stainless steel from Spain held together with 14 screws.

Mrs Fullerton, a bar owner, didn't realise the extent of her conversion into a bionic woman until she travelled to Britain to visit her daughters and grandchildren and was rushed to Scunthorpe

General Hospital with blood poisoning. When she explained her medical history, doctors took X-rays and were astonished at the extent of her rebuilding.

Owais Shaikat, an orthopaedic surgeon, said: "It is very rare to have so many artificial components from one injury. Half of her recovery was through metallurgy and the other half through nature. It is a jigsaw puzzle of bits and pieces from all over the place. It is the nature of surgery nowadays that so many countries produce their own components and clearly in Portugal her surgeons shopped around. They did a very good job and the pieces seem to work. She has had a

remarkable recovery and with some more bone grafting she should be able to walk normally again in 18 months. Bearing in mind her age, and that many younger people would have had problems coming back from this, she has done remarkably well. She has been very brave."

Mrs Fullerton remembers the sunny afternoon in May last year when while hanging out the washing on the balcony of her sixth floor apartment in Quarteira near Faro she fainted and fell onto a concrete path. She was moved to four hospitals and spent nine months going through exhaustive surgery. Mrs Fullerton, who is separated,

has lived in Portugal for 13 years after leaving a successful taxi business in Scunthorpe. "I have lost two stone since the operations and I suppose these metal and plastic bits won't put on weight."

"The only reason that I survived, doctors told me, was that I fell feet first. The doctors did not think I would live, let alone walk, but I am on crutches already. I am a keen golfer and play off an 18 handicap and I intend to play again as soon as possible. Just like the motorcycle champion Barry Sheene, I have been rebuilt with metal plates, pins and bolts. I should be given an EC passport I come from so many places."

"Luckily I had private health insurance - I dread to think what the bill would have been without it."

Her daughter Theresa said: "We call her Bionic Bridget. She has always been a survivor with a will of iron. Now she has been rebuilt with a body of steel."



Bridget Fullerton with her lucky leprechaun

Woman died as balloon failed to clear power line

By PAUL THOMPSON

THE pilot of a hot-air balloon tried desperately but unsuccessfully to lift his falling craft over electricity power lines, an official accident report said yesterday.

As a result, a grandmother celebrating her 75th birthday with a scenic flight over the River Humber died as she and 11 other passengers fell 30ft to the ground. The basket had separated from the balloon when it hit the 33,000-volt power lines and burst into flames.

Audrey Jones's son, Stephen, and granddaughter, Beth, were among the seven passengers seriously injured in the accident at North Ferry on July 20 last year. Mrs Jones, a widow, from Hesse, near Hull, had told friends how excited she was about the balloon ride.

The Air Accidents Investigation Branch report, released yesterday, says David Farrow, the pilot, who was also seriously injured, aborted an attempt to land in a field and tried to lift the balloon over the power lines. "But despite the continuous burn [of propane] he was unable to arrest the rate of descent."

"The basket short circuited the cables and burst into flames. The envelope and burners separated from the basket, which tilted, spilling the passengers out on to the ground some 30ft below." The gas cylinders had poured highly flammable liquid propane into the fire, which engulfed the basket. "It is possible that some of the passengers were tipped out of the basket and so escaped the worst of the conflagration," the report says.

Bob Wilkinson, a witness, said at the time of the accident: "People just dropped to the ground, some with their hair on fire, some with their clothes on fire. One person

was completely engulfed in flames."

Phil Watson, 50, a passenger, said: "I was sitting in the front. People were on fire. Their clothes were on fire and they were screaming."

The balloon had taken off from Hessewood Country Park on the north shore of the Humber but had had to put down in mud on the shore. Mr Farrow, from Leeds, had taken off again but just over six minutes later the accident had happened.

The Civil Aviation Authority yesterday said it accepted the report's recommendation that balloon operators should provide lifejackets on flights that spent a "significant" time over water, and a new regulation will be introduced.

The CAA has not yet decided whether to accept the report's second recommendation, that British balloon manufacturers review designs so that a similar accident does not result in an uncontrolled release of propane.

The report says that a CAA database contains 45 other reports of UK-registered balloons hitting power lines since 1977. Of these, 19 had involved passengers and there had been four serious injuries and seven minor ones.



Audrey Jones on a birthday flight

Driver is cleared of fatal rail crash

By JOANNA BALE

A TRAIN driver was cleared of manslaughter yesterday after being accused of causing a rail crash in which a woman died and 70 people were injured.

There were cheers from railworkers in the public gallery of Luton Crown Court when the unanimous not guilty verdict on Peter Afford was delivered. Outside court, Derek Snook, whose wife, Ruth Holland, died in the accident, expressed dismay at the verdict.

Mr Snook, 69, who attended court every day with his son, Harry, 15, blamed Railtrack's negligence for the accident in August 1996.

Ms Holland, 54, a journalist from Apsley, Hertfordshire, died when the commuter service from Euston to Watford Junction crashed into an empty train which was crossing its path. Mr Afford said he had been under pressure to reach Watford Junction on time, and did not remember seeing yellow lights warning him to slow down to enable the oncoming train to cross the tracks.

The defence team also produced evidence that showed that Railtrack had been in breach of safety regulations and that had these been complied with, Mr Afford would have been able to stop his train in time to avoid the accident.

Summing up, Mr Justice Wright said: "You have to decide whether his driving was so wrong, so bad, so recklessly in disregard that it can properly be described as criminal and merit punishment."

Mr Afford, 57, of Bushey, Hertfordshire, said after the verdict: "My hope is that the shortcomings will be taken on board by those responsible and improvements will be made to avert any future repetition of accidents."

To the ends of the earth and the top of the world. Only two of us have made it.

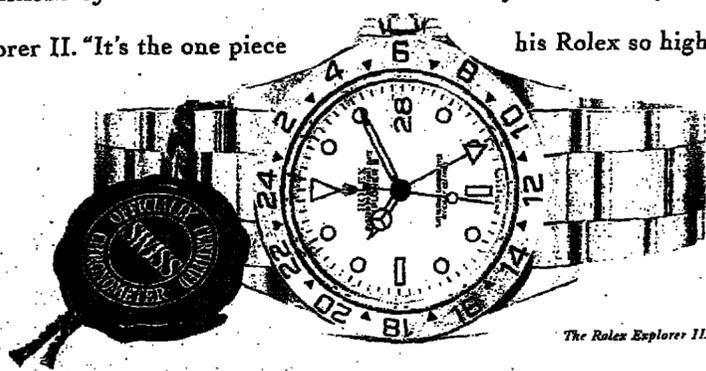


On May 9th, 1994 Erling Kagge became the very first man to achieve the impossible. He had reached the North Pole with no outside help. He had reached the South Pole totally alone. And he had succeeded in conquering Mount Everest at his first ever attempt. He was accompanied on all three expeditions by one watch. His Rolex Explorer II. "It's the one piece

of equipment I know I can trust," he says. "It's built to withstand almost anything, and it's never once let me down." Strength and reliability are the qualities that Erling Kagge values above all others. "I never trust to luck," he says, "but I've found the better your equipment, the luckier you get."

Maybe that's why he values

his Rolex so highly.



The Rolex Explorer II.

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Son reaps reward of POW's love affair with Welsh farm

By DAMIAN WELTWOORTH

GIOVANNI COLUCCI was an Italian prisoner of war when he was sent to work at Great Cloddiau Farm, in Kerry, Powys, and fell in love with the place. Yesterday, after a legal battle with the family of the farm owner, his son was told by the High Court that the £500,000 farm was his.

Mr Colucci's affection for the farm and for Dai Thomas, the owner, and his siblings, was such that when the war ended he returned to Italy, collected his bride, Giovanna, and returned to live there. His son Antonio was born a year later in 1950 and has spent all

his life there. Mr Thomas never married and the Coluccis, who also had a daughter, became like a family to him. While Mr Colucci worked on the farm, his wife did all the housework.

Antonio left school at 16 to work full-time on the farm. When Mr Thomas died, aged 79, on Christmas Day 1983, the farm was left to Antonio under a will drawn up in 1978.

The will was challenged by Vida Mary Bayliss, 53, one of Mr Thomas's nieces, and Margaret Pryce, 60, who had a long affair with Mr Thomas. They claimed that his last testament consisted of two

wills made in 1982 in which he divided his estate between Mrs Pryce and his five nephews and nieces.

Deputy Judge George Laurence, QC, ruled yesterday that Mr Thomas did not have "testamentary capacity" when he made his 1982 wills. He was recovering from a stroke and had forgotten about the earlier will.

The judge said that Antonio was an "unassuming, modest man". Mrs Bayliss, of Garthmyl, Powys, and Mrs Pryce, of Naneaton, Warwickshire, were ordered to pay the estimated £80,000 costs of the case.

Lawrence five told they must testify

By Stewart Tendler
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE FIVE young men arrested for the murder of Stephen Lawrence could face six months in jail if they refuse to testify at the public inquiry, the chairman said yesterday.

Sir William Macpherson of Cluny, the former High Court judge leading the inquiry, said the five are being asked to make statements and indicate whether they will attend hearings starting next week. He intended to call the five but no one could be compelled. However, if they refused they could be prosecuted.

Mr Lawrence, a black student, was attacked by white youths as he waited at a bus stop in Eltham, South London, in April 1993. Three men were later cleared of murder and the case against another two never went to trial. All five refused to answer questions at an inquest last year.

Yesterday Sir William said a refusal to give evidence at the hearing could lead to charges under the 1972 Local Government Act. The penalties include up to six months in jail. But he thought it was very unlikely that the inquiry would lead to the trial of any suspects for the murder.

Reclusive prince keeps an eye on his £100m case

By Michael Horsnell

THE fabulously wealthy Prince Jefri of Brunei descended on the High Court yesterday to watch part of the multi-million pound legal battle in which he is locked with his former friends and emissaries, the merely very rich Manoukian brothers.

The playboy prince, who is the youngest brother of the Sultan of Brunei, arrived amid high security for the first time since the start of the trial more than a month ago.

The normally secretive prince, who has been accused of leading an exotic and erotic life style with an insatiable appetite for young women, broke his habitual silence to say later: "I have been keeping a close eye on the case. It was important for me to have a look at what is going on."

Asked how he felt about the outcome of the hearing, which is one of the most expensive actions in British legal history, he added: "We shall have to wait and see."

After flying in from Brunei, Prince Jefri, 44, arrived in the middle of the fifth week of the case in a dark blue Mercedes estate, accompanied by five minders.

Wearing an immaculate navy suit and blue shirt, he bowed to Mr Justice Longmore in Court 76, and

slipped unobtrusively on to a bench of his solicitors behind the five barristers, including two QCs whom he is employing to fight the action.

Later, in the anticipated six-month case, which is expected to cost more than £10 million in legal costs he will take the witness stand to give his version of events. The prince, who plays polo with the Prince of Wales, is accused of failing to honour two property deals and is being sued for £80 million by the Manoukian brothers.

He is counter-suing for more than £100 million, claiming that the brothers exploited their close friendship with his family, and made unreasonable profits out of him which they concealed.

The billionaire prince, who recently paid £244 million for Asprey, the Queen's jewellers, earlier this week won a judgement in the United States central district court of California, against the former Miss USA, Shannon Marketic. Miss Marketic, 27, alleged she was signed up to £13,400 a week for a trip to Brunei where she was held as an alleged sex slave.

But the case was thrown out when she admitted that while there, she met neither Prince Jefri nor the Sultan, who is the

richest man in the world. The Manoukians have admitted in court to selling *objets d'arts* and property to Prince Jefri worth £550 million over 14 years, and made a profit of £250 million.

Bob Manoukian, who is listed in *The Sunday Times* as the 128th richest man in Britain, has claimed that the prince at one time kept 40 prostitutes at the Dorchester Hotel, which he owns.

Prince Jefri watched intently as the London-based Bob Manoukian, 53, a Christian born in Armenia, who travels on a diplomatic passport, gave evidence for the 13th day from the witness box.

Cross-examined by Gordon Pollock, QC, counsel for the prince, Mr Manoukian admitted a 100 per cent mark-up on clothing sold to the prince at the brothers' Mayfair gentlemen's outfitters, Vincini.

He said his brother, Rafi, who has yet to give evidence, may have charged the prince three times the price he had paid for polo mallets which were supplied to the prince's son, Prince Haksem, in Brunei. A spokesman for the Manoukian brothers said: "The Manoukians continue to pursue their case against him vigorously, and in the full expectation of winning."



Prince Jefri at the High Court: the hearing is one of most expensive ever in Britain

NEWS IN BRIEF

Marquess's brother hanged himself

Lord Nicholas Hervey, the half-brother and heir of the 7th Marquess of Bristol, hanged himself after suffering for eight years from schizophrenia, an inquest was told yesterday. The 36-year-old Old Etonian and Yale graduate was found dead at his Chelsea flat in January.

Paul Knapman, the Westminster Coroner, was told that Lord Hervey's illness had wrecked his career as a fine art dealer and turned him into a recluse. He recorded a verdict of suicide.

Murder charges

Two more men were charged with murdering Damien Trainor and Philip Allen, the Roman Catholic and Protestant shot by loyalists in Poyntzpass, Co Armagh, eight days ago. Earlier, two other men were remanded in custody, accused of the killings.

Mothers' call

Hundreds of mothers and children campaigning against cuts to maternity services marched through Westminister. The protesters, joined by health workers and MPs, demanded an end to the closure of small maternity hospital units.

Drowning case

A woman who was looking after two children who drowned during a barbecue by the River Wharfe in West Yorkshire last July, has been issued with a summons for manslaughter. Wendy Dodd, 40, from Leeds, will appear before Pudsey magistrates.

Challenge fails

A family with two severely ill children failed in a High Court challenge to the closure of the Vitamin B12 Unit at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, Britain's only clinic dedicated to treating disorders in children caused by the vitamin deficiency.

Actress's sorrow

Erin Thompson, the actress, has revealed that she has had a miscarriage and is "burnt out". In *American Vogue* Ms Thompson, 39, said last year had included two movies, injuring her back, miscarrying a baby and getting divorced.

Mussolini car

The car that Benito Mussolini used when trying to escape at the end of the war was sold for £74,510, well above the estimate, at Brooks in Geneva last night. The black Fiat 2800 two-door Berlina was recently discovered in Switzerland.

Irvine praises the use of law awards

By Frances Gibb, Legal Correspondent

LORD Irvine of Lairg, the Lord Chancellor, spoke of his childhood "without privilege" when he presented the prizes at *The Times* Law Awards last night.

He said the awards were important in helping widen access to education. "For those whose childhood represented a world of 'no privilege' or advantage save a happy supporting family, awards in the form of scholarships gave us the priceless advantage of education which unlocked the door to a professional life."

Lord Irvine, who is facing calls from 50 Labour MPs for the removal of some of his executive powers and the creation instead of a minister of justice, said that the awards gave an opportunity to people from different age groups, backgrounds and walks of life to express opinions on subjects of great importance. This year's entrants included A-

level students, postgraduates and prisoners.

The first prize in this year's competition went to Adam Speker, a history graduate studying at the College of Law in London on the University's course for non-law graduates. Mr Speker was presented with a cheque for £3,000 by the Lord Chancellor for his essay on "Press and privacy: is law the answer?"

The awards were sponsored by the chambers of Anthony Grabiner, QC, at One Essex Court, which hosted the reception at Lincoln's Inn. The second prize went to Ben McFarlane, a law student at University College, Oxford; and the third prize to Paul McQuade, a third-year honours student at the University of Dundee, studying law and political science. Mr Speker's essay and a full list of winners and runners-up will be published on Tuesday.

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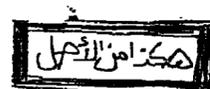
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Killer led £2.8m rhino horn plot from prison cell

By ADAM FRESKO

A MURDERER on the brink of release from jail, looked forward to an affluent life with his lover, funded by the sale of his collection of rhino horns. Wilfred Bull expected to raise about £2.8 million from his collection, one of the largest in the world.

His girlfriend, who had stood by him since his conviction for shooting his wife, enlisted two friends to find buyers. But the RSPCA and police were alerted and the four were stopped after a six-month undercover operation.

They pleaded guilty to conspiracy to sell rhino horn under the Control of Trade in Endangered Species Act 1985, and yesterday appeared at King's Lynn Crown Court for sentencing.

Bull, 62, formerly of Coggeshall, Essex, was sentenced to 15 months concurrent with his life term. His girlfriend, Carol Scottford-Hughes, 50, who was said to have acted out of "love and blind trust", received a 120-hour community service order.

Her former colleague, David Eley, 53, from Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, was jailed for nine months. His girlfriend, Elaine Arscott, 40, will be sentenced in two weeks. The court was told that Bull had acquired 235kg of rhino horn legitimately between 1961 and 1985. He was an antiques dealer of renown and had inherited his brother's half of the family business when he died in a shooting accident that Bull had witnessed.

He was apparently a happy family man but in 1986 he was convicted of killing his wife, Patricia. Mrs Bull's body was discovered by their son in their antiques shop. The shop had been ransacked and £2,000 had been taken from the safe. Police at first thought Mrs Bull, 47, had died in a bungled robbery, but the Smith & Wesson used to shoot her once in the head was discovered under floorboards in Bull's gunroom. He then said the shooting had occurred accidentally when his wife grabbed a pair of tights he had wrapped around the gun. But



In jail: Wilfred Bull.

his trial was told that Mrs Bull had threatened to divorce her husband of 28 years after discovering his affair.

When he was sentenced to life, Scottford-Hughes, from Willingham, Cambridgeshire, vowed to stand by him. In a newspaper interview she said: "What we have is something special."

Bull wrote thousands of letters to her and when he believed he was due for release he began planning to sell the horns. The plan was discussed with Eley and Arscott over dinner while Bull was on home leave in 1996. In the year that he murdered his wife, however, it had become illegal to sell the horn.

Rhino horn is used for medicines and aphrodisiacs in the Far East and Bull was seeking £12,000 a kg for his collection.

Using a false name, Arscott rang the Stock Exchange in April 1996 to speak to an expert on "animal trophies". He tipped off the RSPCA, which with the South East Regional Crime squad set up meetings with officers posing as buyers. During one conversation, Eley asked for the horns to be referred to as antique chairs.

In September 1996, the officers seized the horns from storage in London and arrested Eley, Scottford-Hughes and Arscott. All four accused said that they did not realise they had acted illegally. Shelagh Davies, for Bull, said the scheme had ruined his chances of parole. "In any other circumstances a man of his age having served 12 years would have been expected to be released... but now he acknowledges his eventual release date may be some time in the future."

New legislation brought in last year had relaxed the rules and it was now legal to sell some of his collection, she said. The judge ordered that the horns be confiscated.



David Eley and Elaine Arscott outside court yesterday.



WPC Toni Borrett with some of the stuffed animals, including a tiger cub of less than a week old.

Police seize vanloads of rare species in raid on taxidermist

By TIM JONES

SPECIMENS of some of the world's most endangered animals have been seized from a taxidermy shop by police.

Officers searched the shop in North London and three other premises for more than 11 hours. They needed two removal vans to take away 65 specimens that they suspect were being illegally offered for sale. These included a Bengal tiger, of which there are fewer than 3,000 alive. The animal stood alongside a tiger cub that died at less than a week old.

There was also a gorilla, badger heads, an enormous green turtle, a ruffed lemur, a grey wolf, a chimpanzee and elephant tusks and feet. There were also many birds, including most types of British owls and protected birds of prey.

Inspector John Francis, the central London wildlife officer of the Metropolitan Police, said the raid resulted from a tip-off by a member of the public who was aware of the "eyes and ears" campaign operated by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

Mr Francis said: "There is a huge trade in dead animals and animal parts. There is obviously a good living to be made out of it. Some of them are smuggled into the country after being illegally killed abroad but others are acquired genuinely from zoos."

Mr Francis said that people who bought protected species were also committing a crime after a recent change in the law. He said that the man who owned the shop had made no effort to hide his wares. "There were scores of specimens there and he was able to produce certificates for many of them to show they had been obtained legally. But he was unable to show any documentation for the items we took and he is still being investigated."

Lucy Farmer, of the WWF, said: "Some of the species involved are among the most endangered in the world. And one of the major threats to them is illegal trade. This shows that it is not just happening abroad. It is happening right on our doorstep."

If found guilty, the shopowner could be jailed for two years and fined £5,000 for each offence.

The longest sentence imposed in Britain for dealing in endangered dead animals was two years, given to Nicholas Peters in 1996. He had pleaded guilty to eight of ten charges, including smuggling the skull of a Great Philippine eagle, one of the world's rarest birds. Fewer than 50 are known to survive in the wild.

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IN THE SATURDAY TIMES

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Woody Allen's latest supermodel partner

The ice woman comes

Irish tycoon buys The Independent

Founder laments the end of an era as man behind H.J. Heinz takes control, writes Raymond Snoddy

THE Independent, the national daily launched in 1986 with the slogan "It is. Are you?" was yesterday taken over by Tony O'Reilly, the multimillionaire Irish businessman.

Mr O'Reilly, who played rugby for Ireland and runs H.J. Heinz, the international food group, now owns 100 per cent of Newspaper Publishing, the company that publishes *The Independent* and *The Independent on Sunday*.

The newspaper company Mr O'Reilly controls, Independent Newspapers of Ireland, bought out the 46.4 per cent of Newspaper Publishing owned by The Mirror Group. Andreas Whittam Smith, the main founder of *The Independent*, also sold his remaining 0.25 per cent stake for about £18,000. Last night Mr Whittam Smith, who will remain a non-executive director, described the change of ownership as "the end of an era", adding: "I always said: no profits, no independence. The deal ends months of uncertainty over the future of *The Independent*. It also marks the return of Andrew Marr, who joined *The Independent* at its launch. He resigned as Editor in January in a row over budgets and was replaced by Rosie Boycott, Editor of *The Independent on Sunday*. Mr Marr will have the title of editor-in-chief and will be responsible for the opinion and comment pages. Ms Boycott will remain responsible for all news and features of the daily and will continue to edit the Sunday title. "We can begin anew," Ms Boycott said. "This is going to work because we are going to make it work."

The new owners promised yesterday to make "a very significant editorial investment" but did not give a figure. *Independent* journalists found a note on their computer screens saying that £6 million would be invested — rather less than they were hoping for. Chris Patten and the barrister Helena Kennedy, as well as Mr O'Reilly, are



Rosie Boycott and Andrew Marr at a press conference yesterday. She said it was a chance "to begin anew"

The Mirror Group and is taking on £26 million in loans and debt. The Mirror Group is also guaranteed minimum profits of around £3.7 million a year for five years for printing and distributing both titles.

As most of the The Mirror Group's losses on Newspaper

Publishing have already been written off, there will be a net gain of £8 million to its balance sheet. David Montgomery, chief executive of The Mirror Group, said the deal was in the best interests of all three parties.

Brendan Hopkins, an executive director of Independent

Newspapers of Ireland, said yesterday: "As we have shown in other parts of the world, we are patient and determined."

The Independent is selling about 225,000 copies a day after last September's relaunch. At its peak in the early 1990s it sold about 420,000 copies a day.

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Hanratty DNA tests fail to close case

By STEWART TENDLER

NEW DNA tests in the James Hanratty case have proved inconclusive, a lawyer for the family of the man hanged for the 1962 murder said yesterday.

Geoffrey Binman, a London solicitor, said that tests carried out for the Criminal Cases Review Commission had not proved Hanratty's guilt and that the commission should send the files to the appeal judges.

Hanratty was convicted in 1962 of murdering Michael Gregson after he and his lover, Valerie Storie, were abducted at gunpoint at Deadman's Hill, Bedfordshire. Miss Storie was left paralysed after being raped and shot.

Traces on a handkerchief used to hold the gun were tested against a DNA sample taken from Michael Hanratty, the brother of the hanged man. A partial match was made but more precise samples are needed. These may be available only from an examination. The Hanratty family is said to be too distressed to allow one.

The commission confirmed that tests had been carried out and said that the investigation would be concluded in two or three months.

MP fined £1,000 for borehole pollution

By ROBIN YOUNG

AN MP was fined £1,000 yesterday and ordered to pay £14,000 costs after being found guilty of polluting a water supply beneath his farm.

Michael Colvin, 65, Tory MP for Ramsey, and Ian Hewish, 54, his farm foreman, had denied causing farm effluent to pollute the borehole at Tangley in Hampshire. Hewish was conditionally discharged for six months and ordered to pay costs of £200.

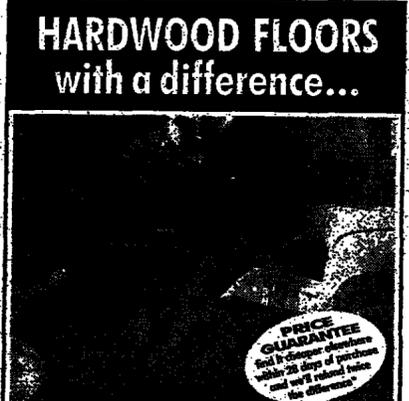
Magistrates at Alton, Hampshire, were told that 200,000 gallons of waste water from a slurry pit had been discharged from a pipe onto a field and had contaminated water from the borehole.

Hugh Davies, for the Environment Agency, said there was no suggestion that it was a deliberate act.

Mr Colvin said it had been felt the system used to dispose of the waste water was "perfectly adequate".

After the hearing he said: "It is a token fine" and added: "I am delighted that Ian Hewish, who as my foreman was responsible for spreading the water, has got a conditional discharge. That says a lot." The offence carries a maximum fine of £20,000 or three months imprisonment.

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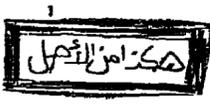
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Passive smoking puts lung cancer risk up by 26%, new report finds

Government ready to introduce a voluntary ban on smoking in public places, reports Ian Murray

THE Government is to support a voluntary ban on smoking in public places after receiving evidence yesterday that confirms a clear link between passive smoking and cancer or heart disease.

The report by an independent scientific committee also recommends steep price increases in tobacco tax. This is almost certain to be included in next week's Budget.

The Government has already accepted the report's finding that smoking is the "single most important avoidable cause of chronic ill health", and is preparing to implement most of its 37 recommendations, aimed at significantly reducing the number addicted to the habit.

Cutting tar levels, mandatory training for dentists to detect mouth cancers, and an end to tobacco advertising and sponsorship are all strongly backed. Other ideas include making anti-smoking aids available on prescription and an awareness campaign to show that smoking causes stress rather than eases it. The tobacco industry is to be pressed to make it admit publicly that smoking is dangerous.

The evidence announced yesterday has been collected during the past four years by the Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health, and was published to mark the fifteenth annual No Smoking Day. The first comprehensive study of the subject for ten years, it shows that 120,000 people a year die from smoking-related disease, that passive smoking increases the risk of lung cancer by 26 per cent, and that 80 cot deaths a year are attributable to mothers' smoking.

The Government will draw heavily on the report in preparing its White Paper on tobacco, due this summer. Increasing prices yearly by more than the rate of inflation is one of the more important suggestions.

Because of the dangers of passive smoking the report calls for restrictions in public places. Although the Government is likely to stop short of bringing in legislation, it will strongly back voluntary agreements to ban smoking in as many places as possible.

"If we could reduce smoking

in public places we could save thousands of lives a year," Nicholas Wald, a committee member from the Wolfson Institute, said. "These deaths are totally avoidable."

Clear evidence from studies covering thousands of people showed that passive smoking increased the risk of lung cancer by 26 per cent and of heart disease by 23 per cent.

Last weekend, it was reported that a study by the World Health Organisation, awaiting publication, showed a 16

6 If we could reduce the incidence of smoking in public places we could save thousands of lives a year



Nicholas Wald of the Wolfson Institute

per cent higher risk of lung cancer from passive smoking. This study was based on a sample of 650 lung cancer cases. It showed that passive smokers had 1.16 relatively higher risk of developing the disease, equivalent to a 16 per cent higher level.

The WHO scientists also gave upper and lower estimates for the level of risk. This was to make allowance for the fact that the sample was so small that the average for the group might not be representative of the population as a whole.

The extra risk range they chose was between 1.44 and

0.93. The higher figure, ignored by the tobacco industry, suggested a 44 per cent higher risk. The lower figure, highlighted by the industry, was below 1 — which is the level of risk for a non-smoker. The industry interpreted this as meaning that the WHO calculated smoking could actually protect someone from lung cancer.

Reports last weekend suggested that the WHO report had failed to prove the link between lung cancer and smoking, but the organisation said in a statement yesterday that this was completely untrue. Although the tobacco industry insists that the WHO evidence shows a statistically insignificant higher risk of death from passive smoking, the statement says emphatically that "passive smoking causes lung cancer in non-smokers".

Derek Cook, from St George's Medical School, in Tooting, South London, said that babies whose mothers smoked were doubly at risk from cot death and that as a child grew up its chances of becoming asthmatic were 50 per cent higher and of getting middle-ear infections were 48 per cent higher. Eighty of the 400 cot deaths in Britain each year were directly attributable to a mother who smoked.

Martin Jarvis, a committee member specialising in addiction, said the evidence was that smoking did not relieve stress except among people who had become so addicted to it that they suffered withdrawal symptoms if they were unable to have a cigarette. "There is a close association between smoking and people feeling bad about their lives," he said. "The more they smoke the worse they feel and giving up smoking makes them feel better once they get over the withdrawal symptoms."

He added: "Tobacco is addictive even though the industry refuses to admit it. Fewer than 50 per cent of regular smokers manage to give it up, even though 97 per cent want to, and only 10 per cent of the poorest people are able to kick the habit."

John Carlisle of the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association said the evidence was based on weak and inconclusive science.



Emily Griffiths, aged 20, who says that she and her boyfriend were attacked

Judge hears his daughter tell of violent attack

By Helen Johnstone

A STUDENT yesterday told magistrates of a terrifying attack on herself and her boyfriend, while her father, a judge, sat listening in the court with the public.

David Griffiths sat impassively as his daughter Emily described the night that she and her boyfriend, George Hibidge, were attacked. Miss Griffiths, 20, from Andover, Hampshire, who is now studying languages in Paris, was close to tears as she told magistrates in Woking, Surrey, that she had thought that Mr Hibidge, 21, was about to die as fists rained down on him and he was repeatedly kicked in the head. As Miss Griffiths had tried to help him, she had been knocked to the ground, and broke three teeth.

She told the court: "It was the most terrifying thing which ever happened to me in my life. That night, I couldn't sleep. I stayed awake and vomited. For weeks afterwards, I felt very nervous, very on edge, very scared."

Miss Griffiths said that she had required emergency dental treatment, and added that she would continue to need dental treatment.

Floyd Thomas, 20, and Scott McLaren, 21, both from Andover, deny assaulting Miss Griffiths on September 13 last year. Mr Thomas also denies assaulting Mr Hibidge and causing an affray, charges which his co-accused admits.

Earlier, the court had been told that Miss Griffiths and Mr Hibidge had been on a night out with friends in Andover when Mr Thomas,

whom he knew, had spoken to the group. Mr Hibidge said it had been a friendly exchange which turned nasty when Mr McLaren joined in, and accused Mr Hibidge of laughing.

He told the court he was then set upon by several youths in an unprovoked attack. As he attempted to get up several times, he noticed Miss Griffiths' attempt to help him. "She was screaming, and holding on to my arm, trying to pull me away. I saw her sprawl out in front of me and hit her face on the floor."

In evidence, Miss Griffiths said they had done nothing whatsoever to provoke the attack. She said: "Fists started raining down on George. I was screaming, trying to pull him out. I saw some lads kicking him in the head."

"The very first thing I remember seeing is Floyd's boot kicking George in the eye. I thought they were going to kill George."

The trial continues.



Thomas denies assault and causing affray

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Liverpool's new bishop has blind date with destiny

THE Bishop of Hull, the Right Rev James Jones, was yesterday revealed in *Blind Date* style as the new Bishop of Liverpool after a delay of 14 months since his predecessor gave notice of retirement.

The Lord Sheppard of Liverpool, appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of Tony Blair, was the first church leader to speak publicly during Robin Cook's marriage breakdown against politicians whose private lives conflicted with the standards of morality expected of them in their public role.

Bishop Jones, 49, who holds a suffragan post in the York diocese, pledged yesterday to continue promoting Christian values in the Church and society. He is expected to take up his new post in the autumn and is tipped as a future Archbishop of York or Canterbury.

The 14-month delay is understood to be because the Prime Minister rejected at least two of the names submitted to him by the Crown Appointments Commission. Bishop Jones is thought to have been left off the initial list because he had been at Hull for less than two years and indicated that he considered that was not long enough. He was finally offered the post three weeks ago.

A bishop's appointment must remain confidential until

Ruth Gledhill meets the outspoken evangelical who follows David Sheppard

William on the day of the announcement, which comes from Downing Street. Bishop Jones was barred from visiting Liverpool or inquiring about schools for his children until yesterday, when he was smuggled into a packed press conference at a Liverpool ecumenical centre and hidden behind a screen until the appointed hour.

"I have often wondered what it was like standing behind the screen on *Blind Date*," said Bishop Jones, who met his wife on a dinner party blind date before he was ordained. "Now I know."

Bishop Jones, author of eight books, is emerging as the leading evangelical in the Established Church's younger generation of senior clerics. Yesterday he said: "It is the greatest honour to come to this city to serve as the next Bishop of Liverpool in the footsteps of one of the greatest modern

bishops, Lord Sheppard. "I will come as bishop to listen to the people, to learn about their beliefs, aspirations and hopes, I will come to serve with all the vigour God gives me, with the power of Christ to transform lives and communities. Regeneration must not just be economic, it must be spiritual and moral, too."

In this month's edition of *SeeN*, the York diocesan newspaper, Bishop Jones questions how politicians can expect the electorate to trust and vote for them "when the moral ground on which they stand is slipping away". Referring to President Clinton and the Foreign Secretary, he says that the moral law has a claim on every aspect of life.

Since moving to Hull from south Croydon in 1994 he has also spoken out on the need for effective parenting and called on the Government to change the tax and benefit systems to promote marriage and the family.

Speaking yesterday about the Hull controversy over John Prescott, he said that in a city dominated by an overwhelmingly Labour council he was perceived as an independent, objective and trustworthy figure to whom people turned when concerned about issues such as possible corruption. "But no one has ever come to me with anything on John Prescott," he said.



James Jones: believes moral ground on which politicians stand is "slip-sliding away"



Bishop Jones's wife, Sarah. They have three daughters

Army son turned to Church after BBC rejection

Bishop James Jones once hoped to spread the word as a broadcaster

FEW people encountering Bishop James Jones when he is not in his dog collar would guess that he is an Anglican cleric. With his easy manner, fashionable beard, received-pronunciation English and army background, he would seem more in the mould of a BBC correspondent.

Yesterday the new Bishop of Liverpool admitted that one of his early ambitions had indeed been to become a broadcaster. Early in life he was advised that he had the voice for the job. It was after being rejected by the BBC that he finally became ordained.

Bishop Jones, 49, became a Christian while he was at school. His father, who worked his way up to the rank of major in the Royal Army Service Corps, sent him to Duke of York's Royal Military School, in Dover, for the children of those in the services.

"We wore battle-dress for school uniform, we marched to meals, we had military training, and church parade every Sunday, chapel every morning," he said. "It was not a religious environment. But one Saturday night I was prompted to go into the chapel. No one had told me how to become a Christian but I knelt down at the altar rail and asked Christ into my life. "I was overwhelmed with a

sense of joy and peace. Looking back, I think that was God calling me to be a priest but in fact I did not become ordained until I was 34."

After a theology degree at Exeter University he trained as a teacher of divinity and drama in the hope of becoming a broadcaster, and taught RE at Sevenoaks. He joined the Scripture Union as an audio-visual producer in 1975, where he became one of the inventors of the "talking book", persuading celebrities such as Derek Nimmo and Thora Hird to produce audio-cassettes of Ladybird religious books for children.

He met his wife, Sarah, a vicar's daughter, at a dinner party during this period, when she was working for the British Council and also with young people. She stopped work to bring up their three daughters, Harriet, now 15, Jemima, 13 and Tabitha, 11. Bishop Jones stayed at the Scripture Union for 12 years but, while on a sabbatical holiday in Switzerland, finally accepted the call to the priesthood, going on to train at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

He did not go into the precise details of the decision yesterday, beyond remarking: "All my sabbatical experiences are near-death experiences." He no longer skis.

Carey supports review of appointment process

By OUR RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

CONTRIVERSY has surrounded the appointment to the See of Liverpool since it emerged that the Prime Minister had rejected the first two names submitted to him for recommendation to the Queen.

Although the process of appointing bishops is not secret, it is highly confidential and thus can become the subject of speculation. The

Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, has indicated that he is willing to consider a review of the process.

That change was likely became clear yesterday when, for the first time since the Crown Appointments Commission was set up in 1976, the archbishops' appointments secretary, Tony Sadler, attended the press conference to answer questions about the results of his work. He said

the Church was totally open about the appointment process but added: "We have a duty to maintain total confidentiality as to what is said about people within the Crown Appointments Commission."

Mr Sadler sits on the commission as a non-voting member, with John Holroyd, the Prime Minister's appointments secretary. The process begins when a bishop announces his retirement and the diocese elects a

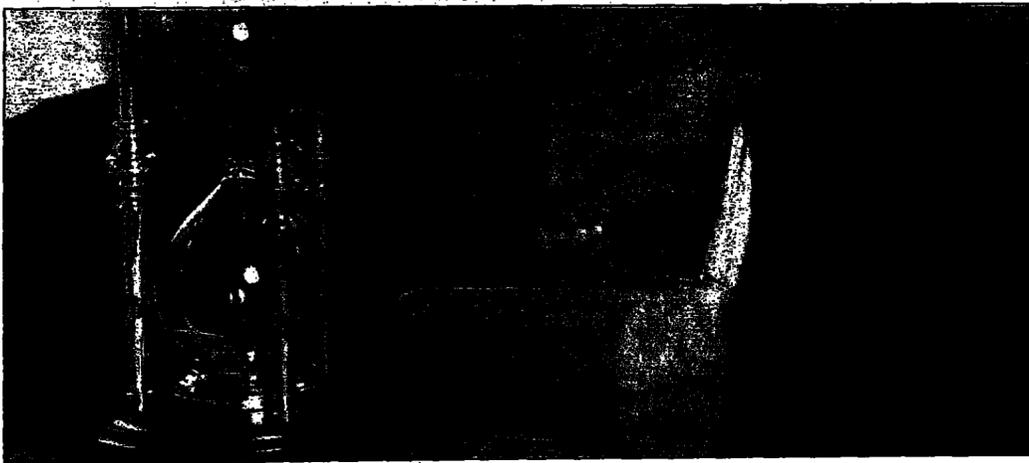
"vacancy-in-see" committee of 25 people to produce a "statement of needs", in effect a job description, and to elect four people to serve on the commission.

Mr Holroyd and Mr Sadler then spend two days in the diocese, speaking to people from all walks of life. In Liverpool they talked to more than 150 representatives of church, business and community groups. A memorandum then goes to the

commission, with the diocesan statement of needs.

The commission, which besides the four diocesan representatives includes six members of the General Synod and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, meets to consider names nominated by people in the Church and diocese. Two names are sent to the Prime Minister, who can ask to see more or recommend one to the Queen.

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Older pupils worst hit by poverty

Study shows background affects GCSEs more than tests at 11, reports John O'Leary

THE worst effects of poverty on educational performance start to emerge only when children reach their teens, a government spending watchdog suggests today.

The link between family background and examination results has been intensely debated in government. Ministers have insisted that poverty cannot be an excuse for under-achievement but are taking social conditions into account in setting targets for primary and secondary schools.

School inspectors and curriculum advisers have noted differences in performance between schools in prosperous and poor areas at all

stages of education. But the Audit Commission's first separate performance indicators for local education authorities show a much wider gap at GCSE than in tests at 11.

Some 58 per cent of pupils at local authority schools in the top-performing area, Kingston upon Thames, passed five GCSEs at Grade C or above last summer compared with barely 20 per cent in Hull and Southwark, South London. However, in national curriculum tests at 11, some 77 per cent of pupils reached the expected level

for their age in top-scoring Richmond upon Thames, compared with 50 per cent in bottom-placed Sandwell, in the West Midlands.

The average results in most authorities with a high proportion of children eligible for free school meals lagged further behind those in prosperous areas at GCSE than in 11-year-olds' tests.

Paul Vevers, the commission's director of audit support, said: "We have no way of knowing exactly why the figures come out as they do but we can see that deprivation has

more of an impact the older pupils are. Home conditions may be less of a factor in primary schools, where most of the work goes on in the classroom, whereas teenagers may suffer if they do not have somewhere suitable to do homework and may be required to do more for the family."

A spokeswoman for the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority said its research confirmed the findings. The average rate for five high-grade GCSEs was 62 per cent in schools where fewer than 5 per

cent of pupils took free school meals but it dropped to 40 per cent where 20 per cent of pupils had free meals. The differences at 11 were less marked.

The Audit Commission's report shows, however, that even authorities with similar levels of deprivation can produce widely differing results. Among the 15 poorest areas, 42 per cent of GCSE candidates achieved five high-grade passes in Camden, North London, but only 20 per cent in Southwark.

The report shows that spending

on schools dropped in the final years of the Conservative Government, despite many authorities putting money into education from their own resources. But the statistics confirm that there is little relationship between class size and examination results. Kingston upon Thames had the best test results at age 11 outside the Corporation of London but was the only authority with more than half of its primary school children in classes of more than 30 pupils.

Local Authority Performance Indicators 1996-97, Education Services, £20 from Audit Commission Publications (0800 502030)

Tories failed on teaching, says Norris

BY A CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER Tory minister has said his party should be ashamed of its failure over 20 years to raise education standards. Steven Norris, the former Transport Minister who stood down at the last election, paid tribute to Tony Blair's determination to "take on" education.

Mr Norris's comments were seized on by the Government, as Stephen Dorrell, the Shadow Education Secretary, launched an attack on the Education Bill now before Parliament. Mr Dorrell accused the Government of intending to abolish some of the most successful schools with proposals in the School Standards and Framework Bill, which will end grant-maintained status.

Senior government sources rejected the charge and said Mr Dorrell should be "explaining the Tory failure" acknowledged by Mr Norris. The former minister said in an interview broadcast last week on BBC News 24, the round-the-clock news channel, and repeated yesterday: "I believe that our failure in 20 years to significantly improve the level of public education is one of the areas that we, as Conservatives, have got to be most concerned about, and frankly, to some degree, ashamed of."

He said Robin Day, "I think Mrs Thatcher particularly took the view that state education was there for those who couldn't afford to provide for themselves."

"I don't think it was until Kenneth Baker's famous [1988] reform Bill that the Conservative Government actually took education seriously."

Warm bed and 'boring' lessons add up to more days off school

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

CHILDREN who regularly play truant said yesterday that a later start to the school day would encourage them not to do so. They also called for less sarcasm from teachers, better help in catching up with missed work, more interesting lessons and smaller classes.

Almost 100 pupils aged 12 to 18 missed school yesterday, with their teachers' permission, to join the first national "truancy panels" in Edinburgh, London and Preston. The panels were set up by Unison and the National Association of Social Workers to find solutions to the "epidemic" of 800,000 youngsters — one in ten — who skip lessons at some stage of their school careers. The children were identified by education social workers around the country.

Natalie, 15, who regularly "bunks off" after morning registration, has not completed a full day at school since before Christmas. "My mum says there's nothing she can do about it because she has

given up on me," she said. "My dad doesn't know I play truant because he does not live with me." She said he would "go mad" if he knew. She added: "I don't see the point of going to lessons like science because I don't want to be a scientist."

Annie, also 15, said: "When I bunk off, I just stay at home and watch TV. I write my own sick notes and no one ever notices." She added: "It's too much hassle to get up in the morning. It should start at 10.30."

Bonnie, also 15, agreed. "It's like a drug — it's addictive. I started at primary school and have been skipping school for the last two years. People know you aren't in school but you say you're ill. That's how it starts, when you just say you aren't well."

The three girls meet in a cafe near their school, spend their dinner money on drinks and duck under the table if a teacher goes past. Natalie said: "Teachers should make lessons more



Two 12-year-old girls, both called Hollie, who joined the London truancy panel yesterday to discuss the problem and to suggest solutions

enjoyable because when you walk in there's a sheet to read and answer questions, and it's the same every lesson."

Annie added: "It would be better if teachers didn't give you such a hard time. But you just get smarmy comments, like, 'Oh, so you've decided to come to my lesson'."

Loui, 15, said he misses

lessons most mornings and intercepts any letters the school sends to his parents. "I stay in bed most of the morning," he said. But things would be different if there were more than one teacher in class to help, or if the classes were smaller.

Sam, 16, often leaves school at lunchtime with a group of

up to ten friends and does not return. "I go home at the normal time so my parents don't know I'm playing truant," he said. "I blame the teachers because lessons are so boring and they have their favourites."

Hollie, 12, said: "I miss a couple of lessons a week because they are just so bor-

ing and I don't get on with the teachers. Teachers should make lessons more fun and interesting instead of just telling us to copy things down in a book."

John Findlay, of Unison, said the panels gave children the chance to explain for the first time why they missed school. "We have been warn-

ing government for five years that truancy has reached epidemic proportions," he said. "We want to know from the kids themselves how we as a society should change to include them."

Transcripts of the children's discussions will be passed to the Government's social exclusion unit.

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Tories failed on teaching says Norris

Early man was first to push the boat out

Homo erectus may get speaking role in history, reports Nigel Hawkes

THE first human ancestors to emerge from Africa a million years ago may have been brighter than we think. Evidence uncovered on an Indonesian island, which has always been cut off from the mainland, shows that it was inhabited by *Homo erectus* and scientists say he must have built boats to get there.

Previously this human ancestor has given no clue of such advanced skills. It is generally assumed that *Homo erectus* had no language and little technical sophistication. But Mike Morwood, of the University of New England in Armidale, New South Wales, says the find has huge implications for the intellectual capabilities of the species. He doubts that a species that could not speak would have been capable of boat-building and navigation.

His evidence, compiled with colleagues and published in *Nature*, comes from dating simple stone tools found on the island of Flores in the Indonesian archipelago.

Unlike Java, which lies to the east, Flores has never been connected to the mainland. That is shown by its impoverished fauna, which consists only of species capable of swimming, rafting on flotsam or flying.

Even at times when sea levels were much lower, Dr Morwood says, reaching Flores would have required a sea voyage of about 12 miles. Dating of the tools, using a technique called fission-track dating, shows that they are 800,000 to 900,000 years old and so cannot have been made

by modern man. *Homo sapiens*, who emerged only 100,000 years ago.

Previously the earliest use of water craft was believed to be the colonisation of Australia by modern humans, from Indonesia, between 40,000 and 60,000 years ago.

The new evidence suggests that "the cognitive abilities of this creature may be due for reappraisal", the report in *Nature* says.

Chris Stringer, of the Natural History Museum, says that if the dating is correct, the abilities of *Homo erectus* would certainly have to be reconsidered. "It would make them more human," he says.

He doubts, though, that the ability to sail a short distance requires language "any more than making hand-axes does".

He finds the claims surprising because *Homo erectus*, never succeeded in crossing from Africa to Madagascar or, during this period, crossing the Straits of Gibraltar into Europe.

Two Ice Age flint axeheads found in a gravel pit in Cirencester, Gloucestershire, are the first evidence that Neanderthal man once lived in the Cotswolds.

The relics, dating back between 70,000 and 350,000 years, were unearthed by Neville Hollingsworth, a geologist who has previously found remains of mammoths, woolly rhinos and a 165-million-year-old squid in the area.

"It's a significant find," Dr Hollingsworth said. "This is the first evidence that there were hominids around here." The axeheads are about the size of a man's palm.



Cornwall's daffodils are being left to rot because they cost more to pick than their growers can sell them for (Simon de Bruxelles writes). A mild winter and high soil temperatures elsewhere in the country means that growers in the South West have lost their usual three-week head start on their competitors.

With a market glut, many have been forced to let the crop rot in the fields at a cost of at least £1,000 an acre. Robert Body, above, who cultivates 100 acres at Lelant near St Ives, was forced to lay off 120 pickers for four days at the height of the season. "We actually had little or no advantage on the rest of the

country, that's the problem. It's been so mild this winter and at the back end of autumn we didn't get the cold snaps upcountry that you would expect." Mr Body has 300,000 bunches in cold storage and is hoping that the Mothering Sunday trade will boost wholesale prices.

Having people for dinner has always been popular

By Nick Nuttall

CANNIBALISM has been rife all around the world, scientists have discovered. Findings to be published soon by Christy Turner, of Arizona University, show that members of the Polacca-Walsh tribe were regularly eaten by the Anasazi tribe — the ancestors of the Hopi and Pueblo Indians.

The researcher has been studying bones from museum collections: it had been thought that marks on the bones meant the tribespeople had been slaughtered in battle. "But their bones had been burnt, broken open and cut. The conclusion is inescapable. These people had been butch-

ered and eaten," Dr Turner says in *New Scientist*.

His findings add to other recent evidence that challenges the contemporary view that cannibalism was rare and often done out of desperation to avoid starvation.

Studies by Tim White of the University of California at Berkeley indicate that throughout Mexico and the southwest of North America, people were systematically captured and consumed. The researcher, who has been excavating sites in Arizona, claims that thigh and arm bones were broken open for marrow and smaller fragments boiled for fatty foods.

Claims that Aztecs ate people have generally been viewed as the ramblings of Spanish conquistadors attempting to justify their aggression. But Dr White said that carefully splintered bones have been found at several Aztec sites. "The evidence shows that the Aztecs really were cannibals," the researcher said.

Studies at Cheddar Gorge in Somerset by researchers, including Chris Stringer of the Natural History Museum, indicate that cannibalism occurred among Stone Age man. They have found skeletons scalped and beheaded, tongues cut out and bones smashed to extract marrow.

Chain of craters linked to comet

By Our Science Editor

THE Earth may have been hit by a fusillade of cometary fragments 200 million years ago, scientists believe. The phenomenon would have been similar to the impact of the Shoemaker-Levy comet with Jupiter in 1994.

Before it hit Jupiter, Shoemaker-Levy broke up, creating a chain of impacts across the planet. No similar series of craters had been identified on Earth until a team from Canada, Britain and the United States re-examined the records. They found five impact craters — two in Canada and one each in France, Ukraine and the United States. When allowance is

made for the movements of the continents since the craters were formed 214 million years ago, three lie on the same latitude, and the other two also appear to be related.

John Spray, of the University of New Brunswick, Canada, and colleagues argue in the journal *Nature* that all five impacts were made within hours of each other, forming a crater chain across the Earth 2,750 miles long.

Around that time, many plants and animals became extinct. This has been roughly dated to 220 million years ago, but more precise dating might show that it was linked with the multiple impact.

Human smells carry hidden message

By Nigel Hawkes
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE first firm evidence that human beings can communicate by scent without being aware of it has been gathered by two scientists in Chicago.

Many species of animal, from insects to rodents, use chemical signals called pheromones to influence each other's behaviour. There have also been unsubstantiated claims that people communicate in the same way.

Now Kathleen Stern and Martha McClintock, psychologists at the University of Chicago, have shown that undetectable scents from one woman can influence the menstrual cycle of another.

More than 25 years ago, Dr McClintock discovered that women who share rooms or live in close proximity tend over time to synchronise their menstrual cycles, suggesting some form of unconscious communication. In *Nature*, the psychologists publish evidence showing that the link is smell.

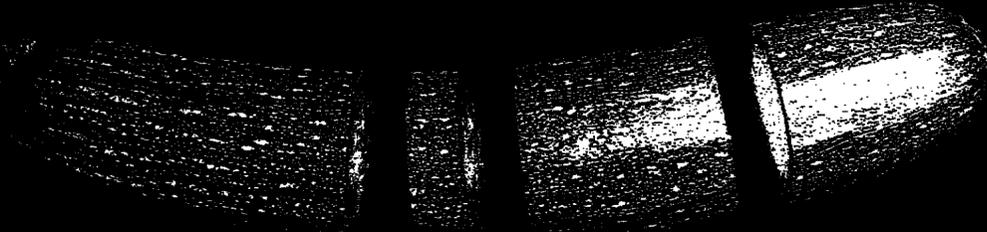
They recruited 29 women aged between 20 and 35. Nine acted as donors and 20 as recipients. Scents were collected with swabs from under the donor women's armpits and applied to the upper lips of the recipients. They said they could smell nothing except for the alcohol used as a carrier.

The psychologists found that swabs taken from women in the early stage of the cycle caused a surge in the hormones of the recipients which accelerated their own ovulation, and shortened their cycle. Swabs taken from donors later in the cycle, at ovulation, had the opposite effect. Over several cycles, the effect would be to synchronise the cycles of the women without them being aware of any detectable scent.

"These data demonstrate that humans have the potential to communicate pheromonally," the psychologists conclude.

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BBC changes are an insult to the voters, say MPs

James Landale on backbench anger at the transfer of parliamentary coverage to 'ghetto' programme slots

MPs from all parties accused the BBC yesterday of trying to downgrade its radio and television coverage of Parliament. Denis MacShane, Labour MP for Rotherham and a former BBC producer, led the charge, criticising particularly the corporation's decision to switch Radio 4's *Yesterday in Parliament* from FM to the less popular long wave frequency.

Opening a short Commons debate, Mr MacShane said that he did not worship parliamentary coverage for its own sake and that much of its proceedings were "tedious, tedious and time-wasting". But backbenchers known as the "awkward squad" with their sometimes idiosyncratic views should be heard.

"The BBC is proposing a fundamental and permanent downgrading of its parliamentary coverage. First *Yesterday in Parliament*, probably the main link between Parliament and the people, is to disappear. Second, the *Week in Westminster* is to go in its present format and slot. Third, the excellent *In Committee* programme is to go.

"What is at stake is nothing less than the dismantling of mainstream accessible broad-

cast coverage of Parliament. The transfer of programmes to graveyard slots or on to the ghettos of long wave... will reduce massively the possibility or choice of listeners to hear what is said in Parliament."

Paul Tyler, the Liberal Democrat Chief Whip, shared Mr MacShane's view that parliamentary programmes were being "consigned to a scheduling ghetto". He said: "This isn't an insult to Parliament — it's an insult to our constituents, and I hope the BBC will think again."

David Winnick, Labour MP for Walsall North, said: "If they're going to treat Parli-



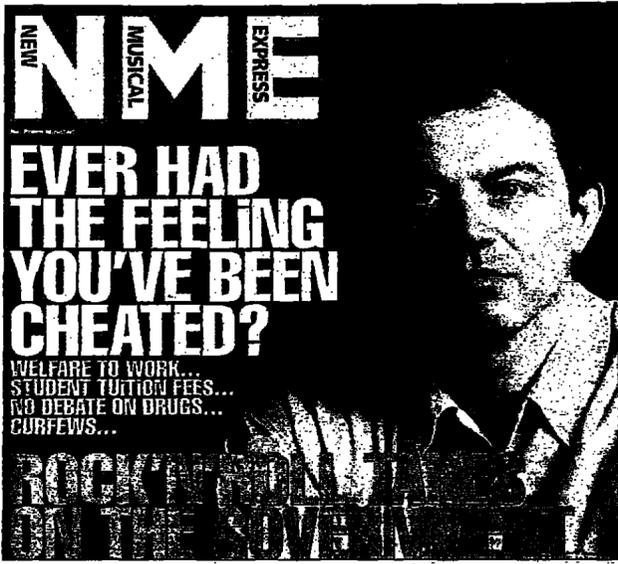
MacShane: a former producer for the BBC

ment in this contemptible way, if they refuse to listen to our justified criticism, if they show contempt for Parliament itself, inevitably we will show contempt for those who are at present control the BBC."

Richard Spring, Tory MP for Suffolk West, said that the changes were neither acceptable nor appropriate. "Long-wave listeners are in decline and the figures produced by the BBC for the two key programmes, *Yesterday in Parliament* and *Today in Parliament*, do not frankly bear close scrutiny."

He added: "We are told that the public find our proceedings boring. That does not mean that the BBC is absolved from its duty to present our proceedings to the public as they are. It is not their duty to make Parliament more entertaining by somehow jazzing up their coverage or by concentrating on the more trivial exchanges."

Mark Fisher, the junior Culture, Media and Sport Minister, pointed out the changes would lead to a net loss of listeners for parliamentary coverage. He said that the BBC should "listen to the very clearly expressed views of Parliament today".



Loud and clear: the *New Musical Express's* front-page treatment of Tony Blair

By POLLY NEWTON

TONY BLAIR'S days as the politician pop stars want to be seen with appeared to be over yesterday after a range of musicians attacked Labour's performance in government.

Jarvis Cocker of Pulp and Ian Brodie of The Lightning Seeds are among those to turn on Mr Blair in this week's *New Musical Express*. Cocker tells the paper: "It is very disappointing. It's worse than if the Tories got in, in a way, because with the Tories you would expect the same old old to happen." Brodie says that it is as if Britain is still

Blair faces pop stars' chorus of complaint

being run by the same company "but there's a different bloke in charge of the board. There's a slight change in policy, but not anything radical." Others are more harsh. Asked about the difference

between this Government and the previous one, Bobby Gillespie of Primal Scream says: "Thatcher was honest about her systematic destruction of the trade union movement and working class. Tony Blair isn't."

Alan McGee, head of Creation Records, who gave Labour £50,000 before the election and sits on the Government's music industry task force, says that musicians are being "completely isolated and slaughtered" by the Welfare to Work policy, which will require the young unemployed to go into full-time education or training after six months or lose their benefits.

At last, Lilley is getting the hang of Opposition

GORDON BROWN has had an easy run on the economy for so long that it is about time his strategy came under close scrutiny. The Tories — and Peter Lilley, the Shadow Chancellor — took a long time to recover from last May's rout, and were forced on the defensive by Mr Brown's self-confident performances in the July Budget and the November Pre-Budget statement. They even failed to exploit the Chancellor's discomfiture over the single currency confusion of last October. The Liberal Democrats have made more impact in highlighting inconsistencies in the Government's spending plans, even if they have overstated their case.

However, the Tories, and Mr Lilley, have now started to perform the correct Opposition role of probing the Government. Mr Lilley has answered some of his internal party critics with two strong speeches in debates on individual savings accounts and taxation — reinforced by Iain Duncan Smith's attack on pensions. It is not that the Tories are necessarily right or the Government wrong. What matters is that the Treasury is having to explain its policies rather than bluster as ministers have too often done since last May.

Mr Lilley has focused on two main issues — the impact of Mr Brown's welfare reforms and hidden tax increases. On the former, Mr Lilley argues that the Brown package will redistribute welfare spending, disincentives and dependency among different groups rather than reduce costs. He suggests both that the numbers dependent on benefits and total spending will rise. He poses several specific questions about the impact of the 10p lower tax band, the tapers by which benefits are reduced as income rises, the new working families tax credit and the proposed child care credit.

In a recent paper for the Centre for Policy Studies, David Willetts reveals that he had advocated such an earned income tax credit when he was in the Downing Street Policy Unit (the idea was included in the 1985 White Paper, before being dropped as the alibi-

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

raise the tax burden in ways which do not affect "headline" taxes such as the basic rate of income tax or of VAT, but do, of course, still have to be paid. A further instalment of such tax increases is likely next week — is indeed, necessary, if the Chancellor is to finance further changes to the welfare system. The Tories have the makings of a campaign about how the middle classes are having to pay the price of new Labour.

Mr Brown is an adroit parliamentary performer, and he has developed a strong welfare-to-work theme. However, we are now moving from the phase of rhetoric and promises to delivery. The Tories are right to press Mr Brown to demonstrate how many are likely to benefit and how, what will be the impact on marginal rates and on the tax system, and how far he is raising taxes on those in work. Otherwise, he will find that his triumph next Tuesday will quickly turn sour.

PETER RIDDELL

Ancient rule under review

AN ANCIENT procedure used to admonish peers for unparliamentary language could be repealed after it was invoked this week for only the third time this century (James Landale writes).

Lord Richard, Leader of the Lords, is considering scrapping Standing Order 30, created in 1626. Under the rule, a

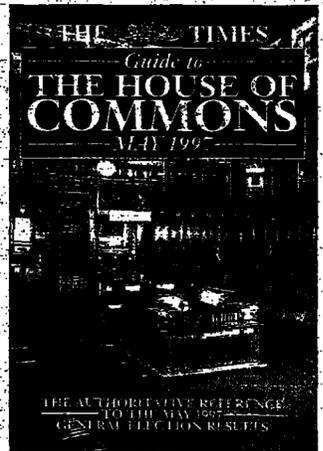
peer who feels he has been insulted can demand that the House vote on whether his critic should be censured.

Earl Russell, a Liberal Democrat peer and history professor at Kings College, London, invoked the order on Tuesday after Lord Whitby, a whip, accused him of having a "hypocritical attitude" and of

"posting" as a friend to students. He refused to retract his remarks and peers voted for the clerk to read out Standing Order 30. The debate was adjourned for 15 minutes to allow tempers to cool. Yesterday Lord Richard said that the rule was not the best way of dealing with unparliamentary language.

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Serbian snipers bring reign of terror to Kosovo

FROM TOM WALKER IN LLAUSHE, KOSOVO

SERBIAN police allowed limited access yesterday to the last sealed area of their security clampdown in Kosovo, revealing a lost valley where ethnic Albanians, isolated by a mixture of state terror and rumours of bloodthirsty paramilitary troops, said snipers had killed at least six people in the past week.

Driving through the deserted village of Llaushe and a landscape of icy rivers, broken roads and forests concealing Serb bunkers was among the most unnerving experience of the past ten days in Kosovo.

The few inhabitants to be seen wasted little time talking to us before locking themselves inside their houses, without electricity supply or telephone links for over a week. They spoke of venturing out only at night to bury their dead. "We need food and medicine, help us, please," implored a man carrying along a hedgerow and onto the road to meet us.

He pointed to a mosque where he claimed a woman shot by Serb snipers had been buried two nights ago. The other victims, including two children, had been taken by police to their headquarters at Srbica, he added.

Where the road twisted on to open ground and a pass

giving a panorama of Bjeshket e Nemura — the Mountain of Doom — the reason for the fears of the local citizens loomed frighteningly near. The way ahead was blocked by a white car slewed across the tarmac, apparently hit by sniper fire. Behind it lay a police checkpoint, complete with a blue tank and sandbags. Masked police seemed to be emerging from behind the stricken car.

We slammed our car into reverse and backed behind the pass, retracing our route to Srbica. At the checkpoint blocking the entrance to the Llaushe valley, police seemed genuinely not to know about the car lying in the road.

In Srbica itself the mood was hardly less threatening. In the middle of the town a policeman with a walkie-talkie was organising a motley convoy of Zastava-carrying Kalashnikov-toting paramilitary troops, whose angry stares were best avoided.

Following the convoy at a discreet distance, we passed the hidden ammunition factory which has gained a demonic reputation as the source of Serbian oppression. At the back of the compound a dirt track led to Prekaz.

Braving a biting wind, journalists and Albanians

swarmed over a slope disfigured by hastily dug graves and tyre tracks of police lorries that had unceremoniously dumped the coffins of the 52 killed in the Prekaz massacre.

The ethnic Albanians defiantly dug up the graves yesterday and quietly reburied them facing east, according to Muslim custom. One grave contained a child's coffin: it was labelled simply "Djegan", Albanian for burnt.

On the open ground between the coffins and the factory, telephone engineers clambered up wooden poles to restore the links cut by the Serb police a week ago. A concrete electricity pylon remained sheared in half. But all around police snipers trained their sights on the village, the mourners and the surrounding hills and woods.

Further down the road the Serb paramilitary troops had parked their Zastavas. Clad in balaclavas, they mingled with police units camped in a compound leading onto the open fields behind Prekaz.

"Don't go any further, Albanian snipers will kill you," one policeman told us. "There are terrorists all around here." We asked him: "When are you going to leave?" An officer, in a trenchcoat, emerged and said: "No comment."



Albanians dig up graves of Prekaz massacre victims, hastily dumped by Serbian troops, to rebury them facing east in Muslim tradition

Death threats to aid groups

Belgrade: Red Cross and Red Crescent delegates left Kosovo yesterday after receiving anonymous telephone death threats, aid officials said on their arrival in Belgrade.

The International Committee of the Red Cross said it hoped its staff would be able to return to Kosovo next week after consultations with the Yugoslav authorities. (AFP)

Nato rejects Albanian 'border guard' plea

By MICHAEL EVANS DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

ALBANIA appealed to Nato yesterday to send troops to guard its border with Kosovo and prevent any overspill of violence from the Serbian province.

Javier Solana, Nato's Secretary-General, said it was premature to consider deploying troops. The plea was the first of its kind from a member of the alliance's 28-nation Partnership for Peace scheme.

At a meeting in Brussels yesterday of the North Atlantic Council, which had

agreed to hold an emergency session at Albania's request, Perikli Teta, Albania's Secretary of State for Defence, said: "We wonder whether the deployment of a Nato peacekeeping contingent on the Albanian-Yugoslav border would contribute to stability in the region."

The Albanian Government is worried about the security of the northwestern border, on the other side of which Serbian forces have been engaged in ruthless military operations against the Kosovo Liberation Army, which is fighting for independence from Serbia. Alba-

nia has close ties with the two million ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and has put its border troops on high alert.

Nato officials said the border was quiet and there was no urgent requirement to send troops, but added that the alliance would keep a close eye on the situation.

Señor Solana leaves for Tirana today to meet Albania's Prime Minister, Fatos Nano. Nato may hold military exercises in Albania and take a role in the international force in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which also borders Kosovo.

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Yves Montand: subject of a paternity suit

Body of film star dug up for DNA tests

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris was the scene of a ghoulish ritual last night when a team of gravediggers, doctors, lawyers and police dug up the corpse of the late Yves Montand to carry out DNA tests in a long-running paternity suit.

Last November a Paris court in a ruling widely condemned as macabre and unethical as well as unprecedented in France, ordered the exhumation of the film star, who died aged 70 in 1991, in an attempt to settle once and for all whether he is the father of Aurore Drossart, 22.

Mme Drossart, whose mother was Montand's lover in the 1970s, first launched a lawsuit in 1989, demanding that the wealthy actor and singer recognise her as his illegitimate child. He refused and declined to undergo blood tests that would have confirmed or demolished Mme Drossart's claim.

Officials said the body, which is buried alongside his first wife, the actress Simone Signoret, would be taken to the Medical-Legal Institute in Paris and subjected to tests by state-appointed doctors led by Dominique Lecomte.

The body's advanced state of decomposition after more than six years means that DNA will have to be extracted from Montand's teeth or bones, and then compared to the genetic "fingerprints" of Mme Drossart and her mother. The medical team has until June to deliver its findings.

Lawyers and police officials were present as the coffin was removed, but no members of Montand's family attended.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Peace deal offered to Angola rebels

Johannesburg: Angola's Government yesterday made its final peace offer to the rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi, and lifted a ban on his Unita (Union for the Total Independence of Angola), hoping to draw it into the political mainstream before a battlefield showdown (Sam Kiley writes).

The move followed a Unita declaration that it was willing to surrender all weapons after 20 years of civil war punctuated by a brief peace in the early 1990s. Dr Savimbi's well-equipped soldiers number only 1,900, Unita claims, but the real total is believed to be much higher. Under the latest offer, Unita troops are expected to give up their arms over the next two weeks while Unita moves its headquarters from Bailundo, in the interior, to Luanda, the capital, and Dr Savimbi gives up control of all Unita-run territory.

Chernobyl closure in doubt

Kiev: The Ukrainian Government has threatened to scrap plans to close the Chernobyl nuclear power station in 2000 if funding for two new reactors at other plants is not forthcoming. It argues that they are needed to compensate for the energy losses at Chernobyl. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is reluctant to finance completion of the reactors because it doubts that the project is economically viable. The Chernobyl explosion in 1986 was the worst civilian nuclear catastrophe. (AFP)

Burmese raid refugees

Bangkok: Two people were killed and 20 injured when a Burmese Army force crossed into Thailand and attacked Huay Khibo refugee camp in Tak province (Andrew Drummond writes). About 8,600 refugees from Burma's Karen state were made homeless when the village of 900 houses was torches. Refugee officials are demanding to know why the Thai Army gave them no protection.

Corruption inquiry delay

Bordeaux: Roland Dumas, 75, the former French Foreign Minister, has had a stomach operation and cannot answer a corruption inquiry summons next week involving Elf-Aquitaine and a sale of warships to Taiwan. M Dumas, Constitutional Council president and fifth in the state hierarchy, was to have been questioned by magistrates investigating the formerly state-owned oil conglomerate. (AFP)

Cash for cable car families

Trento: Families of the 20 people killed when a US warplane brought down a cable car at the Italian ski resort of Cavalese last month will each receive £24,000 compensation. The money - 75 per cent from America, 25 per cent from Italy - is provided under international law without prejudice to any possible damages. The result of a US Marine Corps investigation will be announced at Aviano airbase today. (AFP, AP)

Shell 'toy' kills 11 children

Kinshasa: Eleven children died in Brazzaville when a shell they were playing with exploded, according to Radio Liberté, the Congo station monitored here. Brazzaville bore the brunt of last year's civil war when President Sassou Nguesso overthrew Pascal Lissouba, his successor. Efforts to round up weapons used in that war have led to 5,000 being recovered, mostly in the capital. (AFP)

Lightning sparks safety plan

Singapore: A campaign to reduce the number of people hit by lightning has been announced by Singapore. The city state has one of the world's highest rates of lightning strikes, 50 per square mile per year, and six people were killed last year. The programme includes lightning shelters in parks and on beaches, early warning systems in schools and anti-lightning netting over school entrances and bus shelters. (AP)

Dangerous dogs face French ban

Paris: Dangerous dogs are to be banned in France and existing ones sterilised under a government proposal. Fifteen people, most of them young or elderly, have been killed by dogs in the past nine years.

The announcement coincided with an attack by a rottweiler on pedestrians and a policeman in the Champs-Élysées in Paris. It was shot and wounded by a policeman after its 14-year-old owner had removed its muzzle and set it on police.

Fit bull terriers, rottweilers and Staffordshire bull terriers are among the breeds to be banned. Owners of existing ones will be obliged to register and insure them, muzzle them in the street and ensure adults accompany them. The plan, presented by Louis Le Penec, the Agriculture Minister, at a Cabinet meeting, also aims to stamp out illicit kennels which breed attack dogs.

There has been a surge in the number of incidents involving drug-dealers and suburban gangs using such animals to intimidate their rivals. (AFP)

Clinton plane 'missing' for 24 seconds

FROM TUNU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

THE Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has ordered an investigation after Air Force One, the American presidential jet, vanished from all radar screens for 24 seconds while on a flight with President Clinton aboard. The incident happened on Tuesday as the plane flew ten miles southeast of New York's John F. Kennedy Airport. The flight was being monitored by the FAA's regional control centre on Long Island, the centre that lost track of TWA Flight 800 in July 1996. In that case, a Boeing 747, believed to have been destroyed by an explosion in the central fuel tank caused by mechanical failure, crashed into the sea, off Long Island, killing all 230 people on board.

Although air traffic controllers never lost radio contact with Air Force One, officials are treating the breakdown in radar contact as a serious security lapse. ABC radio reported yesterday that at least seven other planes had disappeared from FAA radar screens at the same time.

Mark DiPalmo, a spokesman for the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, told WNBC television that the President's plane vanished at 8.38am, while flying at 21,000ft. It could not be traced for a full 24 seconds, no small amount of time in aviation terms.

Attempting to play down fears, however, he said: "There were no other planes in the vicinity. The President was not in any jeopardy." He added, less reassuringly, that the long-range radar at the Long Island centre had a "history of going off".

Yesterday the FAA announced that it had shut down the radar installation temporarily. Les Dorr, a spokesman, described the shutdown as "a completely routine procedure while the incident is investigated". The President is travelling from Washington DC to Connecticut when the "disappearance" took place.

President may give evidence in Lewinsky hearings

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

A DRAMATIC plan for President Clinton to testify in front of the Monica Lewinsky grand jury was being warily explored by his lawyers and Kenneth Starr, the independent prosecutor, yesterday. The legal gambit was made by Mr Starr who asked the White House whether Mr Clinton would be willing to make an appearance at the Washington courthouse, where the grand jurors are hearing evidence in secret.

Without making a formal response, the President's lawyers have indicated that he was likely to testify, but only if he followed Ms Lewinsky, the former White House trainee who has said she had sexual relations with him but then denied it.

There are certain to be further negotiations over the timing and scope of the President's testimony before any agreement is reached. If they collapse, Mr Starr could simply issue a subpoena, but that could lead to a prolonged court battle if Mr Clinton claimed executive privilege, the legally grey area of his right to conceal conversations with aides.

A presidential appearance before the jurors would raise the stakes for Mr Clinton. On the one hand, it would be a bold gesture towards convincing the American public that he is not covering up an affair with Ms Lewinsky. On the other, he would risk being caught out by questions, as he was during his deposition in

the sexual harassment lawsuit brought by Paula Jones.

Still, Mr Clinton's political advisers have been urging him to testify as quickly as possible, fearing that his high approval ratings could collapse if he seemed to be demurring. Immediately after the scandal broke on January 21, he promised to give as many answers as soon as he could about his relationship with Ms Lewinsky, but he has not done so, other than to deny it was sexual.

There is still much uncertainty over when Ms Lewinsky will be called. Negotiations with her lawyer, William Ginsburg, broke down and it was left unclear whether she would be given full immunity from prosecution in exchange for her account of the episode, or a more limited immunity that would mean her evidence could not be used against her but she could still be prosecuted for perjury or obstruction of justice based on evidence from other sources.

Lawyers for the President had reason to be nervous about evidence given to the grand jury by Kathleen Willey, a former White House aide who has claimed that Mr Clinton made a crude sexual advance to her in the White House. Ms Willey appeared without a lawyer, a signal that she was collaborating with Mr Starr. Her account is crucial because it directly contradicts Mr Clinton's sworn denial that he did not make the advance.



President Clinton bonding with Buddy before the chocolate labrador's operation

White House dog succumbs to the neutering lobby

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Clinton has decided to have Buddy, his seven-month-old chocolate labrador retriever, neutered. Buddy has Doris Day, among others, to thank for his as-yet unscheduled appointment with the knife. The former singer and Hollywood actress now leads one of the animal welfare groups that had been urging the Clintons to set an example to other pet owners.

The White House doctor, Connie Mariano, wrote to Ms Day saying: "The President has asked me to inform you that, with the advice of their vet, the First Family plan to have Buddy neutered. Thank you for your concern."

A representative of the Doris Day Animal Welfare League said the actress was thrilled by the news. The group holds an annual Spay Day USA and promotes neutering as a way of preventing animal overpopulation and the deaths of unwanted animals in shelters and pounds. The Humane Society, America's largest animal protection group, applauded the decision, saying that neutering promotes better physical and behavioural health for dogs and cats. The society said Buddy's personality should not be affected. Martha Armstrong, the society's vice-president, said: "Pets don't have any concept of sexual identity or ego. Neutering a male dog or cat will not change his basic personality. He doesn't suffer any kind of emotional reaction or identity crisis."

A White House spokesman said the decision was prompted by concerns for Buddy's health and was not motivated by confrontations between the puppy and Socks, the Clintons' neutered family cat.

Earlier, Mr McCurry had said there were no plans to neuter Buddy, who moved into the White House two weeks before Christmas. Dog lovers bayed in protest. One reason was that an unneutered mature dog would be more likely to lift its leg and mark all the historic furniture that taxpayers have paid for in the White House.

British puppy would escape the vet's knife

BY VICTORIA FLETCHER

DOG experts in Britain expressed surprise at the news of Buddy's threatened operation. Ted Chandler, president of the British Veterinary Association, said that in Britain the operation was never recommended for happy, normal dogs. Only in cases involving severe sexual problems would castration be advised and, even then, only when the dog was mature. "A seven-month-old dog is only effectively a teenager. Having it neutered affects its growth, so it would not develop normal characteristics, would put on weight and be psychologically affected," he said.

Jo Coulson, secretary of the British Labrador Retrievers Club, who has worked with Buddy's breed for more than 30 years, said that the operation completely changes a labrador's gregarious personality. "Labradors are by their nature boisterous and fun-loving. Having them neutered removes some of their wonderful enthusiasm for life," she said. "The problem is that many people buy these cute puppies without realising their future strength and intelligence and the careful handling they need. When they grow bigger, owners turn to neutering to calm them down."

Republicans bewildered over unforeseen eclipse of their rising star

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

COMMENTARY

AS Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky can testify, Washington is not a town with a tolerance for unanswered riddles. But with no satisfaction in sight on the inner secrets of what is now dubbed the Oral Office, it has searched for new entertainment. The most tantalising puzzle is "Why did Bill Paxon resign?" The most worrying for Republicans is "Who will now replace Newt Gingrich?"

For two years, Bill Paxon has been the brightest hope of House Republicans. He has been the favourite of moderates and conservatives to succeed Newt Gingrich, who is rumoured to be planning a quibotic tilt at the presidency, as Speaker. Yet at the end of last month Mr Paxon, 44, circulated a letter to House Republicans declaring: "I will never run for office again. Never. Not even for dog warden."

The reason, he said, was to spend more time with his two-year-old daughter Suzy Ruby and his wife, Susan Molinari, a former House star and now a TV interviewer. The image of the harmonious Paxon household has been valuable before to the Republican marketers; Ms Molinari gave the opening speech at the 1996 Republican convention, stepping down amid cheers to embrace her husband and baby in the front row. But even so, the explanation left Capitol Hill stunned. "I have young kids,

"one member told the conservative weekly *National Review*. "There must be more to it." The columnist Arianna Huffington asked: "Was Paxon's decision the result of pressure, even a threat?" She urged him to "add a constructive footnote to his distinguished career in politics and perform a great public service by telling the whole story behind his early retirement".

Incredulity stems from Mr Paxon's previous dedication to his 21-year political career. He planned his first run for Congress when still at college. Last year he played a central part in an aborted rebellion against Mr Gingrich. He was expected to run against the Texan Dick Armey, Mr Gingrich's deputy, for Mr Armey's job, and then Mr Gingrich's. Shortly before he quit, he called dozens of members to say he was "seriously considering" jumping into the race.

His departure leaves Republicans in both houses in something of a mess. Many expect Mr Gingrich to leave next year to mount a presidential campaign. The race for the Speaker's job has now begun. The problem is that Mr Armey, Mr Gingrich's obvious successor, shares Mr Gingrich's lack of discipline, in verbal syntax and congressional diplomacy. He is mistrusted by House colleagues, after first backing the anti-Gingrich putsch, then dropping it.

The Republicans' best hope is perhaps that Ms Lewinsky breaks her silence and lures the spotlight away until they arrive at answers to their own crucial conundrum.

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Wife puts Masai 'right to batter' on trial

FROM DAVID ORR IN KAJIADO, KENYA

WIFE-BEATING, considered a normal part of conjugal relations among the Masai of East Africa, could soon become illegal in Kenya.

A Masai woman, battered during 13 years of marriage, is seeking a court order to have the practice outlawed. The 29-year-old mother is also bringing a criminal case against her husband that could see him, a herdsman and security guard, fined or jailed.

The challenge to Masai culture is being made by Agnes Siyankoi Moita, now living apart from her 56-year-old spouse in a lodging house in Kajiado. This dusty settlement in the heart of Masailand, 80 miles south of Nairobi, the capital, is an unlikely setting for a legal battle that threatens centuries of tribal custom, and no one could have guessed that the quietly-spoken Ms Siyankoi would be the person to lead the crusade for reform.

There was little in her arranged marriage to Moita Risa ole Kiranto to differentiate it from any other in the Masai community. He secured her hand in return for three head of cattle. They went to live in a *manyatta*, a traditional settlement of huts made from sticks, grass and cow dung. She bore him four children to add to the eight he already had by his first wife. And he beat her.

"After one year of marriage, he started beating me," she said. "He beat me so much, once a month at least. At first I thought it was normal. My father beat my mother and she even had scars on her body. But the beatings of my husband were very bad. The one last September was the worst of all."

Ms Siyankoi has already testified in Kajiado Magistrates' Court that her husband set about her with his *rungu*



Agnes Siyankoi Moita, who says her husband beat her at least once a month. Her case could bring an end to centuries of Masai custom

(club) when she returned home from a wedding party last September. Having told her: "Go and make love to your father," Mr ole Kiranto is alleged to have bolted the front door from the inside and thrown her to the floor. She claims he beat her for hours, only interrupting his assault to chase away neighbours who had been alerted by her cries. "He broke my collar bone and hurt me badly," Ms Siyankoi said. "He only

stopped when he was so tired he couldn't continue. I was treated as an outpatient for a month afterwards."

Masai customary law and practice permit a husband to beat his wife. It is even expected of a man that he should do so. It is believed that, like children, women need to be periodically disciplined. Tribal elders agree on acceptable ways of administering the beatings, using a slender stick on the arms,

back and lower body. A man who does not chastise his wife in such a way is held in low esteem by his peers.

Ms Siyankoi had already complained to her father about her husband's cruelty a number of times. When she staggered into her father's house after the beating in September, he advised her not to return to her husband. Her mother protested that a beating was no reason to leave the marital home, but her father

was adamant. There the matter would probably have rested had it not been for two things: Ms Siyankoi's strong sense of justice and the fact that her brother is a lawyer. Under his guidance, she made a report at the local police station that resulted in Mr ole Kiranto's temporary detention. She then filed a criminal suit against her husband and took the case to the Kenyan High Court where she wants the practice of wife-

beating declared repugnant. "I've been called a bad wife by many people and the Masai elders say the matter should be settled in the customary way, not in court," said Ms Siyankoi. "But some people have supported me."

The hearing of the criminal case is due to resume on Monday. Among those expected to give evidence is Mr ole Kiranto's first wife. She said that she would never return to her husband.

US court deports plotters against Saddam

FROM IAN BRIDGES IN WASHINGTON

SIX Iraqis who helped the CIA in failed plots against President Saddam Hussein could be sent home from America, a move they say would lead to their execution as traitors.

An unexplained court ruling that simply declared the six to be a threat to national security and ordering their deportation was issued by an immigration judge in Los Angeles.

The decision was based on secret testimony from FBI agents who could not be cross-examined. Lawyers for the defendants were not even allowed to see the judge's decision in full.

The public section of the ruling, disclosed by *The New York Times*, said only that the decision was based on classified material and could only be released to individuals with proper clearance from the Government. They did not include the defence lawyers.

The secrecy seems to be related to a murky world of sub-plots, double agents and informers involving the Iraqi resistance in which the FBI and CIA are still not prepared to show their hands.

The Government does not dispute that the six worked for two resistance groups, the Iraqi National Congress and the Iraqi National Accord, trying to undermine Saddam, and operated inside northern Iraq's no-fly zone after the Gulf War with support from the CIA at a reported cost of \$20 million (£12 million).

The plots against Saddam collapsed in 1996 when his troops swept through northern Iraq. More than 5,500 Iraqi Shiites and Kurds were offered refuge by the CIA and evacuated first to Guam and then to America. On arrival in California, the six were detained by the Immigration and Naturalisation Service.

They complained last year that they had been falsely accused of being Iraqi government spies. They said the accusations arose from infighting among rival factions of the Iraqi resistance. There have long been suspicions that Saddam's agents infiltrated the ranks of the plotters.

The six have 30 days to appeal against deportation. Their only hope is for Janet Reno, the US Attorney-General, to find another country willing to take them.

Mr Nicolas Jayantha Dhana-pala, a senior UN diplomat, arrived in Baghdad to begin talks today with Iraqi officials to prepare for inspection of eight presidential sites (Michael Theodorou writes). The checks are to start this month.

Suspected Russian hitman arrested by Athens police

FROM PHILIP PANGALOS IN ATHENS

GREEK police have arrested a suspected member of an international gang of assassins — fuelling fears that Russian mafia-style hitmen are still in the country.

Vladimir Selisero, 32, a former Russian secret service agent, was held on Monday night at a routine police roadblock in Athens. He had a forged Russian driving licence and claimed to be applying for Greek citizenship, posing with false papers as a Greek from the former Soviet Union.

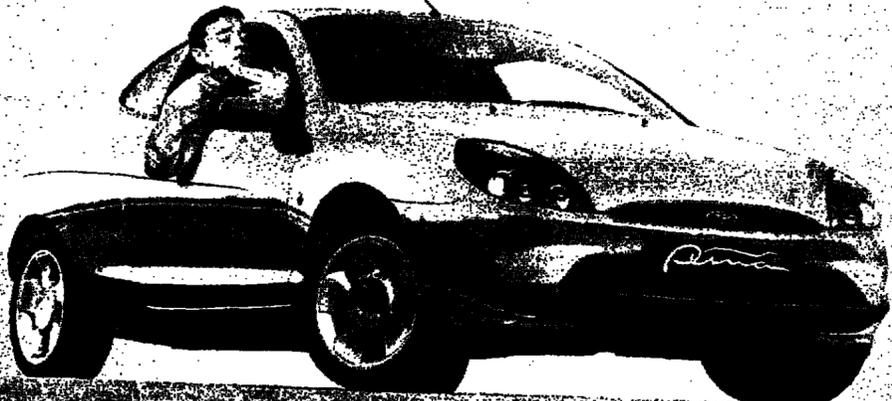
He was referred to the newly formed national Organised Crime Unit, which identified the Russian from Interpol's wanted list. This was the first major arrest by the unit since its creation by George Romeo, the Public Order Minister, in the wake of a steep rise in violent and organised crime. The arrest of

Mr Selisero, who claims to have entered Greece in May from The Netherlands, appears to confirm fears that a gang is still active in Greece, which it sometimes uses as a base for operations in other European Union countries.

The arrest of Mr Selisero comes after last year's murder of Alexander Solonik, the alleged co-ordinator of the crime ring, who had plastic surgery in South America. Solonik was found hacked to pieces in a suitcase. Solonik's girlfriend, a former Miss Russia, was found murdered and mutilated elsewhere in the city.

Mr Selisero has reportedly refused to name any contacts in Greece. Russia is expected to seek his extradition as he is wanted for the murder there of a police officer and other high-profile assassinations.

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Tree-skin pilot skips disaster by a nose

FROM IAN RAATH IN HARARE

AN Air Zimbabwe pilot coolly avoided catastrophe on Tuesday night after his aircraft was seized by violent air turbulence in a thunderstorm and collided with tree tops in the north of the country.

Captain Raymond Sherwood, 67, controlled the lurching BAe146 as its 59 passengers screamed in terror on the approach to Hwange national park and forced it back into the air. Then, with a large branch sticking out of the nose and the forward landing gear jammed inside, he flew on to Harare. There he landed the plane on its four rear wheels, holding the nose above the tarmac until the aircraft came to a halt.

The passengers, mostly German, French and Portuguese tourists, burst into applause. Two passengers and a cabin crew member received minor scratches as they slid down the emergency chute. "What Raymond did was heroic," said an Air Zimbabwe spokesman, David Mweinga. "We and the passengers have nothing but praise for him."

Throughout the crisis Captain Sherwood, who retires in eight days, maintained calm among crew and passengers. "He stayed so cool," I was hardly afraid," said Mara Groenboom, from the Dutch town of Scrooskerke. There was a bang when it hit the tree tops," said Mr Mweinga. "There was panic. People thought they were going to crash."

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New look for ancient Nile view

Drawings at Windsor provided vital clues to assist ten-year restoration. Richard Owen reports from Rome



Anna Maria Reggiani: thinks Demetrius was artist

ONE OF the wonders of the ancient world, the *Mosaic of the Nile* at Palestrina, is going on public display after a ten-year restoration during which key river scenes were repositioned using 17th-century drawings kept at Windsor.

Scholars at Palestrina now believe the second-century BC mosaic — a vibrant and detailed pictorial map of the flooded Nile valley from Ethiopia to the Mediterranean — is the work of Demetrius the Topographer, an artist from Alexandria who came to work in Rome. Palestrina, known as Praeneste in Roman times, stands on a hilltop 20 miles from Rome at the foot of the Sabine Mountains. It was a favourite summer resort of Roman emperors such as Augustus, Tiberius, Nero and Hadrian.

Made prosperous by trade with the eastern Mediterranean, it vied with Rome in wealth and status. In the first century BC the town was razed by Lucius Cornelius

Sulla, Rome's brilliant but ruthless "blood dictator", because it made the mistake of siding with his military rival, Caius Marius.

Sulla — not a forgiving man — slaughtered the town's male inhabitants, but he rebuilt it in even greater splendour, crowning it with a huge temple dedicated to the Goddess of Fortune. Six terraces led up to a stunning panorama of the plain below and the coast beyond.

Remains of the sanctuary at the top were later incorporated into a Renaissance palace, the Palazzo Barberini. The Palestrina museum in the palazzo reopens on Saturday with the great mosaic — about 16ft square and made up of thousands of tiny coloured fragments — as its centrepiece. Anna Maria Reggiani, the superintendent of archaeology for Lazio region, said the ancient Romans had been "fascinated by the Middle East, and by Egypt in particular". The cult of the Goddess of



A detail of the restored 16ft square *Mosaic of the Nile* at Palestrina, on show again this week

Fortune became combined with the Egyptian cult of Isis, and statues of both were found in the temple's ruins. The *Mosaic of the Nile* — like the obelisks of central Rome, a

sign of an obsession with Egyptian power and glory — was laid on the floor of the Great Hall in the Forum in the lower town beneath the temple (where Palestrina cathedral

now stands). First uncovered in the early 17th century, the mosaic was taken to Rome but then returned in pieces to Palestrina by the Barberini family. Scholars have since discovered — from drawings made at the time of the mosaic's discovery and preserved at Windsor Castle in the Queen's Collection — that it was reassembled wrongly.

"Some of the scenes were transposed — for example, the busy harbour and the riverside bower with girls under a floral arch," said Sandra Gatti, the museum director. "I think we've finally got it right." The mosaic has been rehung, with direct natural lighting making every delicate colour and feature clear. Dr Reggiani has little doubt that Demetrius the Topographer was the artist. "I take a romantic view of archaeology," she said. "Some think it is

by a Palestrina artist, but I have been to Egypt and seen actual scenes that leap straight out of the mosaic."

The 2,000-year-old map shows Alexandria, where a military victory is being celebrated at the port, and what appear to be the tombs of Luxor, against a landscape teeming with wildlife and exotic vegetation. Some creatures are fantastic, especially in the upper Nile, "which the artist probably knew less well". Others are clearly recognisable, including crocodiles, hippopotamuses, giraffes, lions and monkeys.

The Palazzo Barberini and its temple remains passed to the state after the Second World War but, like other artistic treasures, have been neglected. Italy's Government has embarked on a museum restoration programme in the run-up to the millennium, with Palestrina receiving £1.7 million.

Dr Reggiani said that visitor access to the palazzo remained "problematical", since no trains run directly from Rome to Palestrina and car parking is limited. "We want to put Palestrina on a new tourist route with other attractions just outside Rome, such as Hadrian's Villa and the Villa D'Este near by at Tivoli," she said.



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Sunny economic forecast lures captains of industry back to Kohl camp

THE German Government, loudly proclaiming that at least 200,000 more jobs will be created by the end of the year, yesterday turned the election campaign into a struggle for the hearts and minds of the captains of industry.

The occasion was the upbeat presentation by the Economics Minister, Günter Rexrodt, of the official forecast for 1998: 2.5 to 3 per cent growth, stable prices and a balance of payments surplus for the first time since unification. The new jobs would emerge, he said, partly because of the improved

Germany given upbeat pledge of 200,000 more jobs, writes Roger Boyes in Bonn

growth forecast. The minister suggested that the relentless upward surge towards five million unemployed had been halted.

Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor, has always managed to synchronise his election campaigns with economic recovery and he is hoping that this will help him fight off the Social Democratic challenge in September's general elec-

tion. On Tuesday the leaders of the employers' organisation sided firmly with the Chancellor, despite having criticised the slow pace of his reforms. Above all, the Social Democratic pledge to reduce the top rate of income tax to 49 per cent has sent employers rushing back to the Chancellor's camp: the managers want far more drastic tax cuts. "I see the election as a

kind of plebiscite on tax reform," said the Chancellor.

The fear of a Social Democrat-Green government is sending employers, until now openly sceptical about the Chancellor, back into the conservative corner. The Greens have passed — albeit narrowly — an election programme which envisages a litre of petrol costing £2.50, an immediate withdrawal from nuclear power and various company taxes. "That amounts to a policy of de-industrialisation for Germany," said the head of the German Confederation of Indus-

try, Hans Olaf Henkel. The perception that Gerhard Schröder, the Social Democrat challenger to the Chancellor, is a radical moderniser, a German version of Tony Blair, is already beginning to wear off as employers realise that he is chained to his party.

The Social Democrats want to roll back the limited reforms made by the Chancellor — withholding some sick-leave payments and making it easier to dismiss employees — and agree with the Greens that Germany should get rid of nuclear power. The party

also wants to impose an extra tax on companies which do not employ apprentices. "Everyone says Herr Schröder is trying to be a new Blair," said a senior member of the employers' organisation. "But they are missing the point. Germany needs a Margaret Thatcher, not a Tony Blair."

However, Herr Schröder still enjoys the support of some industrialists, including Volkswagen's chief, Ferdinand Piech. The two flew to London last Saturday — only hours before Herr Schröder was due to hold his wedding

reception — to press VW's case for the purchase of Rolls-Royce.

The Government forecast however — despite its promise of more jobs and better growth — is not exactly a glowing tribute to Bonn's economic management. Even if the new jobs do arrive, there will still be 4.4 million unemployed on average this year, and the anticipated jobless rate of 11.5 per cent at year's end will be roughly the same as last year. Jobs are still slipping away in eastern Germany and the gap between east and west is widening by the day.

Turkish boycott dampens party spirits for EU

By Charles Bremner

TONY BLAIR and the Queen officiate today at a 26-nation summit to launch a "historic new era" for Europe, but there will be little celebration, thanks to the crisis in the Balkans and a boycott by Turkey.

The London conference was called, under Britain's EU presidency, to mark the Union's imminent eastward expansion. The EU's 15 leaders will join Cyprus and the ten other approved candidates, in proclaiming a new area of democracy and prosperity. The day, which includes lunch with the Queen, will end with a communiqué that calls the EU "a beacon of hope" to states of the old communist bloc.

However, the summit has failed in its aim of consolidating Turkey after its election last December from the EU entry queue. Ankara, an EU applicant for more than three decades, has refused to come to Lancaster House as demonstration of its grievance. President Demirel says the Union must "repair the error" of its policy towards Turkey before it will resume normal relations. The dispute is threatening efforts to bring Cyprus into the EU as well as adding to the risks of a Balkan flare-up in Kosovo.

The trouble in the Yugoslav province, where Serbian forces are striking against the

ethnic Albanian majority, has been pushed to the fore in today's gathering. President Chirac of France was pressing Britain yesterday to have the 26 foreign ministers use the summit to produce a strong European call for a rapid Kosovo settlement. The EU's ability to handle a crisis on its doorstep will again be under test as the 15 foreign ministers meet tomorrow in Edinburgh.

The British and French want to signal to Turkey today that, even if it is not yet worthy of EU entry, it is a member of the "European family". The approach is not widely shared in the EU, but is backed by the United States, which is aghast at the way Germany and other EU states have slammed the door on Turkey, a longstand-

ing member of Nato and ally in an unstable region.

The stinging match between Bonn and Ankara intensified over the past week when Mesut Yilmaz, the Prime Minister, used one of Hitler's expressions, accusing the Germans of trying to carve out Christian Lebensraum to their east.

Turkish anger is complicating the EU's attempts to promote a settlement to the 24-year-old division of Cyprus. Although Cyprus has been promised rapid membership, the EU is determined not to import a conflict that requires United Nations troops to keep the peace. Greece says that it will veto the accession process for everyone if the EU goes ahead with a plan to require a Turkish Cypriot delegation in the entry talks. The Turkish Cypriot administration is refusing the EU move, out of solidarity with Ankara. France raised the stakes yesterday, signalling that it would block the entry of Cyprus if the Greek Cypriots handled negotiations alone.

Formal entry talks start in Brussels later this month with the first batch of aspiring members: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia and Cyprus. The others — Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria — have to wait a few more



Yilmaz, accused Bonn of seeking Lebensraum



Stone-throwing Palestinians in Ramallah run for cover after a demonstrator was felled by a rubber bullet

West Bank anger erupts after killings

From Christopher Walker in Jerusalem

THE West Bank erupted yesterday in the worst violence this year, with at least 44 Palestinians wounded by Israeli troops firing rubber bullets.

The immediate cause of the rioting was the killing by Israeli troops of three unarmed Palestinian labourers at a roadblock near the holy city of Hebron on Tuesday night. The army had initially claimed that their van had failed to stop at a checkpoint in a suspected attack, but yesterday Major-General Uzi Da-

yan, the West Bank commander, admitted it now appeared there was no violent intent.

The scale of the unrest was a reflection of mounting frustration during the six-year intifada, there was not so much grassroots anger. The people are fed up that peace has given them so little. They are ready to explode.

In the village of Dura, near Hebron, more than 10,000 people joined the funeral procession for the three dead men, who became "martyrs" overnight. As the procession snaked through the narrow streets, there was a tangible feeling that there is more

trouble to come. Among the mourners were old men leaning on canes and young masked activists who shouted slogans warning Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, whom Palestinians from Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, to the average Arab blame for the deadlock. One banner read "Beware Netanyahu, blood leads to blood."

Earlier, Mr Netanyahu telephoned Mr Arafat to express his condolences and the Knesset also expressed its sadness. The Palestinian Authority denounced the killings as "massacre in cold blood".

Iran given court bill of \$247m for terror

From Associated Press in Washington

A FEDERAL judge yesterday ordered Iran to pay \$247.5 million (£154 million) in damages for the death of an American woman killed in a terrorist bombing in Gaza in 1995. "The court is seeking to deter further terrorist actions," said Royce Lamberth, a district court judge.

The victim, Alisa Flatow, 20, a student from West Orange, New Jersey, was attending a Jerusalem seminary. She was killed with seven Israeli soldiers on April 9, 1995, when a suicide bomber drove a van into their bus in Gaza and blew it up.

The ruling is believed to be the first time that US citizens have been awarded punitive damages against a foreign nation accused of sponsoring terrorism.

In Jerusalem, David Bar-Illan, a senior aide to Binyamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, described the ruling as "a very, very important precedent that places the responsibility on terror-sponsoring nations for the actions carried out by their proxies".

Lawyers representing Stephen Flatow, Alisa's father, had argued that Islamic Jihad — the group blamed for the attack — was financed by the Iranian Government, making Tehran responsible for her death.

The United States froze Iranian assets valued at \$12 billion in 1979, after the overthrow of Shah Reza Pahlavi and the taking of American Embassy hostages.

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Dr Thomas Stuttford on personality disorders, growth hormone deficiency, St John's wort and tinnitus

Hope for the lost souls in a living limbo

Mrs Joyce Allan, who suffers from depersonalisation, is one of many who will be relieved to hear that the Institute of Psychiatry in London has been given a grant by the Psychiatry Research Trust to start the world's first unit dedicated to the investigation and treatment of depersonalisation.

Depersonalisation is the unpleasant sensation that parts of one's body, or even one's whole body, has changed. The patient may feel that he lives life as an automaton, and is an outside observer of his mental and physical processes.

Sufferers view themselves, and their reactions to the world, as if from a distance, or as if they were actors in a film.

Normal people may get some sensation of this when they are very tired, it can be induced by certain drugs including cannabis, it can be a symptom of brain tumours, migraine, epilepsy, depression, schizophrenia, obsessive compulsive disorder or a host of other psychiatric conditions. Conversely, depersonalisation may appear as a disorder in its own right, not associated with any problems such as tiredness, or disease whether physical or mental.

Four years ago Mrs Allan, a 52-year-old marketing consultant who had succeeded in a tough, male-dominated world, awoke feeling rather muzzy-headed. Her immediate thought was that she must have caught flu, but she was

not deterred and set off to work. However, her symptoms persisted. She found it hard to concentrate and was, in her opinion, less fluent than usual. She also felt that her memory was not as sharp as she expected.

Her colleagues noticed no difference. To them she gave the impression of being as dynamic as ever. She, however, felt distanced from them and her head felt as if it were filled with cotton wool.

Mrs Allan could tolerate the feelings of distance from her business associates but was distressed to find that her emotions towards her family, and towards life in general, were blunted. Although she still loved her husband and grown-up children, her com-

mitment to them had lessened with the blunting of her emotions. Even as she made love to her husband, she watched her reactions as if she were a spectator — it was an entirely physical process devoid of ardour.

The Maudsley Hospital and the Institute of Psychiatry in London were at hand to help Mrs Allan. A series of tests including magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) brain scans, electroencephalograms (EEGs) and cardiovascular assessment, together with a full examination, failed to show any physical disease. Initially, psychiatrists wondered if she were suffering from a depressive illness, but finally a diagnosis of depersonalisation was made.

Nobody knows why depersonalisation suddenly overtakes a person such as Mrs Allan, whose life at the time seemed to be trundling along in the same way as it had done for many years.

Some psychiatrists think that the condition may be induced by anxiety, or by some unacknowledged worry, and that depersonalisation is a way of distancing oneself from a present fear or past disaster. Conversely, neurologists have suggested that it could be the result of neurotransmitter imbalance, which could in particular be affecting the temporal lobe of the brain — and that this biochemical upset had deranged the amygdala, an

area that has a pivotal role in processing emotion. Past treatment has ranged from psychotherapy to electroconvulsive therapy and, more recently, antipsychotic drugs and antidepressants have been tried.

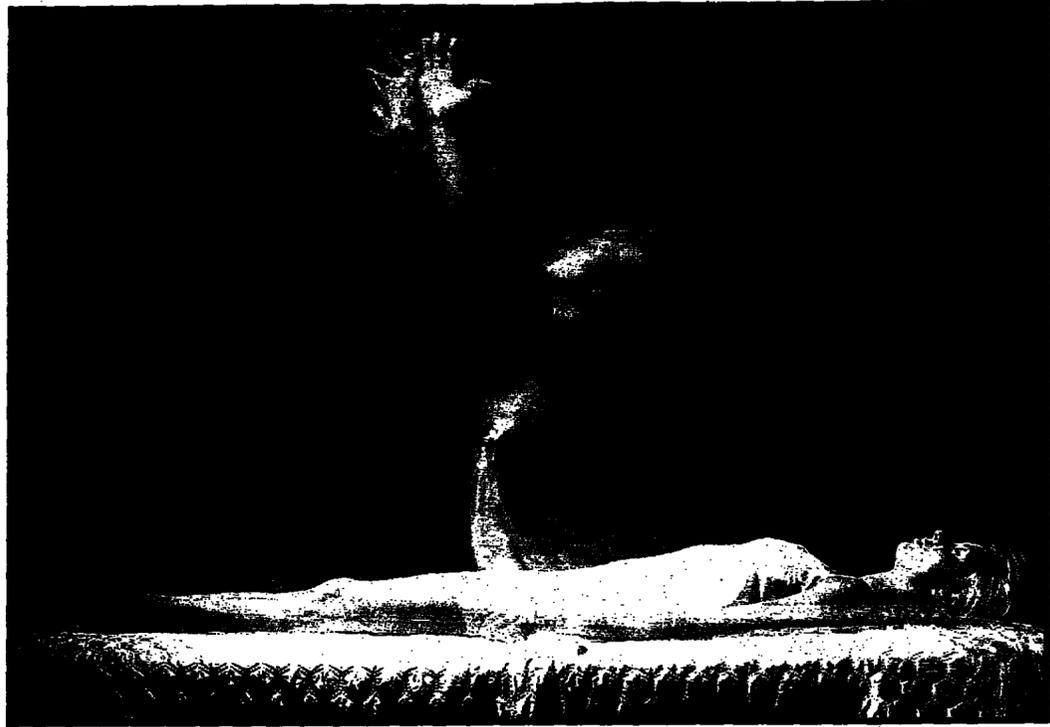
When there is a treatable underlying cause, the depersonalisation may improve. Recently, the 5HT reuptake inhibitors — antidepressants — have been used with some success, and research is under way into the use of the new specific serotonin and noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors.

One survey showed that 12 per cent of patients attending psychiatric hospitals suffered from severe depersonalisation. Furthermore, a third of undergraduates had suffered from

transitory depersonalisation when they burnt the candle at both ends.

Tony David, who is Professor of Cognitive Neuropsychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry, will run the unit with Dr Mary Phillips, who is an expert in the neurobiology of emotion and modern techniques of scanning, including functional MRI which demonstrates the pattern of signals from the brain while the patient performs particular tasks.

Professor David and Dr Phillips hope that their unit will have patients referred from all over the country. For further information contact Professor Tony David, Institute of Psychiatry, London SE5 8AF (0171- 929 3139).



Out-of-body experience: for sufferers of depersonalisation, the feeling of disconnectedness from body and feelings becomes a permanent state

How flowers can relieve depression

MANY gardens contain the attractive, yellow-flowered ground cover St John's wort (*Hypericum*). The plant contains a red pigment, hypericin, which is thought to account for its antidepressant and tranquilising powers. In one trial of 3,250 depressed patients, 80 per cent showed improvement when taking *Hypericum*. A smaller trial demonstrated that it was particularly effective against seasonal affective disorder (SAD), the gloom that can descend once the evenings draw in.

This year a larger trial has shown that taking *Hypericum*, in conjunction with therapy using bright light, helps patients with SAD to get over their lethargy, low mood and a tendency to oversleep during the winter months. This seasonal increase in appetite is thought to be a remnant of a primitive instinct to lay down fat stores, like a hibernating dormouse, before the winter sets in.

Old remedies of plant origin such as quinine, salicylates, digitalis and morphia, and newer preparations such as those made from yew trees to fight some forms of cancer, are now an established part of medicine. The medicinal qualities of plants such as garlic and the flavonoid-rich tomatoes, carrots, brightly coloured greens and root vegetables are regularly trumpeted.

St John's wort is just one of many herbal remedies that have been used for centuries. It has been prescribed for depression, anxiety, premenstrual syndrome and the midlife crisis. It is said that John the Baptist discovered its medicinal powers; presumably such an ascetic character would have learnt of its tranquillising ability rather than its gynaecological powers. The modern preparation of St John's wort was first marketed in 1939, but by 1996 its sales were running at 125 million marks (£4 million) a year.

DR ANTHONY RICKARDS

is a consultant cardiologist at the Royal Brompton and National Heart Hospital in London. He is also the former president of the European Working Group on Pacemakers and set up the British national database for patients who have pacemakers. He therefore has direct knowledge of 150,000 cases.

Pacemaker patients can shop safely

made to feel unnecessarily concerned about the risks involved. Manufacturers of pacemakers have been aware since the Seventies of the risks of electromagnetic fields interfering with the normal functions of a pacemaker. However, even if a patient with a pacemaker is trying to escape from a shop with his body and goes through the detector he will, at the most,

only be doing so for a second or two. No damage has ever been reported from this, and no honest patient has ever come to harm as a result of standing too close to one of these machines while being checked out. The risk, Dr Rickard says, is a theoretical one. For a check of the database shows that none of the 150,000 patients has ever suffered from these detection devices. He would therefore hate to see their quality of life curtailed in any way by having supermarkets and department stores declared out of bounds to them.

Rationing in a growth area

Most people think of growth hormone deficiency in terms of a child, with the mind of a ten-year-old, say, but the body of a four-year-old. But it occurs in adults, too: supplies, produced by the pituitary gland, can be reduced as a result of a tumour of the pituitary gland or the hypothalamus (the part of the brain lying immediately above the pituitary gland), or after surgery or irradiation of either of these two. Sometimes it carries over, perhaps undetected, from childhood.

Growth hormone still has a role in adult life. It is involved in the process of laying down fat and muscle, is a factor in preserving bone strength and important for a well-ordered sleep pattern. In 1962 the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported a case which illustrated that replacement therapy with thyroid and sex hormones and steroids had been inadequate in maintaining a patient's vigour; she recovered her wellbeing, ambition and enthusiasm for life only when growth hormone was added to the cocktail. Twenty-five years later it has become accepted that pituitary

damage and subsequent growth hormone deficiency causes a loss of energy for work and little enthusiasm for a social life. Lack of the hormone also leads to an increase in the number of cardiovascular risk factors and, according to at least one *Lancet* report, cardiovascular mortality. The heart problems, together with poor muscle develop-

ment, means that both exercise tolerance and strength are reduced. Another report, in 1996, showed those with a deficiency were twice as likely to break bones. The rich and glamorous, who resent ageing — and the concomitant fat-laden abdomen and chest, coupled with skinny arms and legs — have already learnt that the hormone can reverse the process.

In younger people, however, such attributes give cause for concern because they are associated with increased risk of heart disease. Having discovered why one in 10,000 people has a poor quality of life, it might be assumed that such people would be given somatotropin, a synthetic human growth hormone produced by DNA technology. Not so — somatotropin is expensive, and rationed in Britain. In one case, a patient who had undergone pituitary surgery rarely left his bed. He was admitted to hospital, given growth hormone and in 14 days was discharged as a fully functioning member of the community. He visited his own GP, who said: "Why should I spend 1/200th of my total drugs bill on one patient?" Without treatment, the patient relapsed and died. The GP did have a point — it was the system that had led to his patient's death. Another sufferer, a medical student, had an answer to the problem. When she qualified, she found hospital jobs in areas where somatotropin was not rationed, and has maintained the quality of her life.



Growth hormone deficiency is found in adults as well as children

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SOcial drinkers know that a heavy evening may induce tinnitus, a ringing in the ears, which is made even worse if aspirin is taken to ease a headache. It has been said that aspirin and alcohol, two As, are the commonest cause of tinnitus.

Ring of truth for drinkers

Dr Alex Crawford, of the Renfrew Council on Alcohol, has reviewed the effect of alcohol on hearing. The good news is that alcohol doesn't affect the ability of social drinkers to detect pure tones; the bad news is that it does

damage, in consequence, drinking too much and noisy music is a damaging mixture. Problem drinkers have an increased risk of serious hearing troubles which often remain undetected. A day-long conference, organised by the Medical Council for Alcoholism is taking place at St George's Hospital in London tomorrow. The programme will include a debate on the benefits of alcohol as well, as would be expected on Friday 13, all the bad news.

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Rattled by the Scot Nats

Magnus Linklater says Labour's decline is likely to be temporary

Opinion polls, like barometers, respond to a brisk tap. A sharply administered question can send the needle spinning from "set fair" to "much rain" almost before you've noticed a cloud in the sky. Thus Labour, only ten months into the job, finds itself suddenly on 39 per cent, with the Scottish National Party on 38. Storm clouds have been posted. The SNP announces itself as the official opposition, on course to deliver independence as soon as it wins power in a new Scottish parliament. Labour takes cover beneath its umbrella.

The response has verged on the hysterical. From the right come loud rumbles of "I told you so", reminding us that devolution is the slippery slope that leads to the break-up of the United Kingdom. From the left are dire warnings that Labour has lost its grip on Scotland by courting middle England and abandoning the welfare state: the political map, we are told, is being redrawn in front of our eyes.

It's all nonsense. Opinion polls are fidgety things. I remember the panic caused before the 1992 election by a poll in *The Scotsman* which found that support for independence had reached a record 50 per cent. At the election, however, the SNP had fallen back to 21 per cent. The most that can be read so far into this one is that Labour is going through a bumpy patch. As Bob Worcester, of MORL, commented: "This is the Scots using a poll as... a warning shot across the Government's bows."

That warning is a peculiarly Scottish response. In England, the gap between Labour and Conservatives remains a yawning 25 percentage points; the protest vote, even if there is one, has found nowhere convincing to go. In Scotland, however, there is a ready-made opposition. While the Tories still lurk well below the radar in polling terms, and the Liberal Democrats have dropped back behind them, the nationalists have moved smartly forwards to take up the slack. Abandoning their pre-referendum truce with Labour, they have reverted to all-out hostility, proclaiming themselves not just the party of independence but the natural home of the Left. For some time now the SNP has been remoulding itself as a social democratic body, sound on economic policy, left-wing on social policy. Alex Salmond, the SNP leader and a former banker, has been fitting it out as a modern, European-style party.

Labour, by contrast, has lost ground because of a series of political gaffes and the effect of the disappointment factor: heavy promises of a new deal for Scotland have so far translated into Tory spending limits and local government cuts. Far from the Millbank epicentre, the Scots have remained relatively immune to the charm of Tony Blair, whose visits north of the border have been unsatisfactory, ending with his aides

shaking the dust off their shoes and muttering about dinosaur politics and parochial attitudes. They were particularly shocked last week by a motion passed at Labour's Scottish conference, describing Gordon Brown's welfare reforms as "economically inept, morally repugnant and spiritually bereft", a phrase now gleefully adopted by the SNP. Scotland, it seems, stays obstinately "off-message".

That does not mean, however, that the voters have decided to embrace independence. Nothing has happened to suggest that the Scots have been suddenly converted to an idea they have flirted with for at least a generation but have always, in the end, rejected. It is extraordinarily foolish of some nationalists to announce, as they have done, that their first act on winning a majority in a Scottish parliament would be to hold a referendum on independence. If they did so, the electorate would simply say "no". Mr Salmond, a shrewd player, has been more cautious. He points out that one poll does not make a landslide, and suggests that there is still a long way for the party to go.

He knows that if the SNP adopts a destructive attitude to the new parliament, it runs the risk of losing much of the support it has recently built up. The Scots voted "yes" in the referendum partly because they liked the idea of the united approach by Labour.

Lib Dems and the SNP. They used this parliament to work, and they will not warm to a party which is seen to be using it only as a stepping stone to independence. Mr Salmond understands that. The last thing he wants is to be the Gerry Adams of Scotland, a militant operating outside the system — he wants to be inside, using it to his benefit. This means hard choices. Proportional representation will hand his party a large share of the seats, but he will need to form alliances if he is to wield real power.

Would the SNP join up with the Lib Dems? Unlikely. Some tactical manoeuvres have gone on between them, but for a devolution party to make common cause with the party of respect makes no sense in the long run. An alliance with the Tories is unthinkable, so Mr Salmond will probably have to go it alone for much of the time. This means turning his party into a credible opposition, with a range of policies that can convince Scots as to the economic and social benefits of the country. He has about a year in which to do it. Left-wing postures are easy in opposition but, come election-time, voters want something of more substance.

These are critical times for both parties. Both have ground to make up and much to prove to the voters. I suggest that, for the time being, they focus on policy, before tapping the glass again. The needle, I suspect, will soon swing back to something approaching natural equilibrium.



WARNING: PASSIVE SMOKING POSES GRAVE RISKS...

Capitalism of the casino

Currency speculators cause chaos, as East Asia found to its cost. What is to be done?

When I was in Hong Kong last week, I was told an intriguing story about George Soros. He is said to have taken part in last October's speculative attack on the Hong Kong dollar, which was beaten off; he is also said to have lost \$2 billion as a result. There are two interesting points about this story: the first is that it is believed by senior figures in Hong Kong; the second is that it is not correct. Yet it is an example of the hostility to financial speculators which is spreading throughout Asia.

It is not only Danuk Sri Dr Mahatir Mohamad, the Malaysian Prime Minister, who expresses this hostility; many others do so more discreetly. The chairman of Goldman Sachs, Jon Corzine, recently went to Tokyo to meet and greet his bank's customers. At one meeting he found himself being attacked most virulently over his bank's role in global markets. Some Japanese tabloids have started an anti-Semitic campaign, blaming the financial troubles of Asia on Jewish speculators. I did not hear the least hint of anti-Semitism in Hong Kong, but even now one hears plenty of criticism of the damage done by global speculators. Popular anti-Semitism is also reported from the Asian Islamic countries of Malaysia and Indonesia.

There is danger in this. The orthodox economic argument, which many people in Hong Kong would accept, is that there was a major flaw in the policies of the worst-affected Asian states; speculators, led by the hedge funds, spotted the market anomaly and forced a correction. There is some truth in that — speculation succeeds only when it is based on reality. At a popular level, the role of the speculators is not regarded in so benign a way. They are seen as the Germans saw the bankers in the inflation of the 1920s. Most Germans were ruined by the great inflation, but successful speculators became rich. In Asia, many businessmen have lost their businesses and many ordinary people have lost their jobs. The ultimate cause may be the weaknesses of Asian "crony capitalism", with its tendency to corruption, but the immediate cause was the withdrawal of funds by international bankers. Few of these bankers were Jewish, but the hedge funds undoubtedly acted as sniffer dogs for the banks, and many New York hedge fund managers are said to be Jewish.

In Japan, it is the Japanese banks which are currently imposing a destructive credit squeeze on small and medium-sized Japanese businesses. In yesterday's *Financial Times* there was a horrifying account by Michiyo Nakamoto. "Japan's credit crunch is hitting middle-class homes, where executives are taking their lives... companies find that the banks they had relied on all along are suddenly pulling out." This is happening to relatively healthy as well as to unsound businesses. The same sort of credit squeeze happened in Britain in the early 1990s, and many smaller British businessmen swore they would never trust a bank again. In Japan, some anger is being directed against international speculators.

The hedge funds are relatively small, with total assets of only a few hundred billion dollars; their function is to act as buffers between investors and markets. The big assets are those of the world banking system. Yet the hedge funds get their finance from the banks, so the banks know what the hedge funds are doing. The profits are made when a strong trend is established, which occurs when the big international banks pile in behind a market movement that has already started. Hence speculation in currencies tends to exaggerate fluctuations; one should not think of these currency traders as primarily in competition with each other, but as in collaboration with each other in building big waves. Such speculators, in an open global market, may serve a useful purpose in correcting anomalies, but at the expense of massive and recurrent destabilisation.

If one looks at the process from the point of view of Asian governments, it is almost intolerable. They may recognise the defects of their own system. The incoming Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji's new economic policy is concerned to reform the Chinese banking system, to prevent over-investment, to take the Government out of business decisions, to reduce corruption and so on. But he

plans to carry out these reforms before China considers making the currency convertible. It would be hard to argue that his task would be easier if China, as well as Hong Kong, had had to cope with the massive inflow and outflow of these speculative funds.

In Asia, there is the additional resentment over the dollar's monopoly as a hard currency. Asia has a much higher savings rate than the United States, and substantially finances the US Government. To them, it seems that the money goes from Washington to New York, to be used to speculate against their currencies. They blame America; they blame Westerners as such and some of them blame the Jews. It is becoming an ugly and unstable relationship.

The American response is to advocate more liberalisation, and to put the blame on Asia's past policies of restriction. I doubt whether the Asian governments will be persuaded to take the American view. At present, it is the greater China economy which has withstood the crisis best, though, as Mr Zhu points out, China still has massive anomalies to correct. Hong Kong and Taiwan have been protected by the stability of China, and China does not have a convertible currency. China is now, in purchasing power parity terms, the world's second largest economy. It seems likely that the Chinese will move slowly on capital liberalisation.

The International Monetary Fund has been holding a seminar in Washington on capital account liberalisation. The seminar reached the familiar Western consensus. As reported by Robert Chote for the *Financial Times*: "Asia's financial crises should not discourage emerging market economies from opening themselves to capital movements, but they should make sure domestic financial systems are strong enough to cope with big inflows and big outflows." Numerous speakers emphasised that the price to be paid for these gains was the danger of greater economic instability as

Brown's proxy war with Blair

Iain Duncan Smith says the Chancellor has won on welfare

When the Chancellor stands up next week, it will be with the confidence of a man in charge, secure in the knowledge that the past ten months have made him pre-eminent in the Cabinet and influential across the length and breadth of the Labour Party.

Despite the fact that Tony Blair appointed Frank Field to oversee the welfare review process and to publish a Green Paper outlining the structure of such reform, it is Mr Brown's hand that can be seen.

A running battle has developed between Harriet Harman and Mr Field over this reform and the Field Green Paper was first blocked and then delayed until after the Budget, by which time it will be all but irrelevant. Instead, we have seen a series of Treasury leaks, hinting at reductions to a variety of different benefits. So fierce did the reaction to those leaks become that, in an attempt to regain control, the Prime Minister set up a welfare reform committee, which he appointed to chair.

Yet this feud between Mr Field and Ms Harman should be seen for what it is: a war of wits. The real battle has been taking place between Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, who differ fundamentally on welfare. While the Prime Minister gives the impression of being steeped in conservative values, Mr Brown has much stronger roots which reach down into the heart and soul of the Labour Party. It is he who fundamentally continues to believe in the redistribution of wealth through the tax and benefit system.

Recently, when Mr Brown was heckled and jeered at the Labour Party Roadshow on Welfare Reform, he responded with an arrogance that was breathtaking. He simply blamed his opponents for being "Trots" and said there must be increased security and tighter control. At the Scottish conference this week, it was he who received the plaudits and Mr Blair who received the brickbats.

Even recent leaks by Ms Harman on child tax allowances were meant to be a signal to Labour activists of the Chancellor's desire for redistribution away from middle income earners. No matter that Ms Harman and her chosen *Guardian* journalist added two and two together and came up with 22 — the principle was established. He simply reached out and stroked the heart of Labour, leaving Mr Field seething.

It has long been clear that Mr Brown sees little merit in the sort of reform programme that Mr Field talked of in the past. Mr Brown wants his Budget to come first; he has his own review chaired by Martin Taylor. He simply refused to accept that Mr Field's Green Paper should be produced before the Budget. It is likely to be a very watered-down version of what we know to be Mr Field's radical views.

A clear sign of the Chancellor's control lies in correspondence from the Prime Minister's office. In November, the Prime Minister wrote that the Department of Social Security would be issuing a Green Paper, at "around the turn of the year". After the turn of the year, he wrote "we will publish our Green Paper when it is ready". In a letter written at the end of last month, Mr Blair capitulated to the Chancellor and announced it would be published a week and a half after the Budget. Press reports that Ms Harman has lost the Prime Minister's confidence and is to be moved in the next Cabinet reshuffle illustrate Mr Blair's exasperation, but also his impotence.

Another illustration of the Chancellor's dominance emerges from the Manning report by the Government Actuary. This points out that Mr Brown's hasty July Budget last year, resulting in a fall in investment income, putting great pressure on pension funds. As a result, the Government has been forced to increase the rebate which helps encourage people to move from the unfunded state pension scheme (Serps) to funded private pensions.

Rather than admit his mistake, the Chancellor has transferred the cost from personal pensions to occupational schemes. Two reviews have been conducted in the past six months. The second has been carried out because a majority of the 1,800 responses from the industry to the first review called for the abolition of Serps. Such is the confusion about the Government's position on Serps that there have been only 171 responses to this unnecessary second review. With just under 40 per cent of the social security budget tied up in pensions, this is a critical component of overall welfare reform. Mr Blair has talked endlessly about a new deal on pensions, yet it is bogged down with Mr Brown's hand firmly upon it. Even clear proof of the Chancellor's mismanagement is not sufficient to enable the Prime Minister to wrest back control of pensions.

Gordon Brown must be grinning quietly in his office. He knows that he has his hand firmly on the throat of the Government and it is he who must now be obeyed. When he put down the hecklers, I wonder who he was thinking about.

JASPER GERARD

Taxing work

THE flamboyant owner of one of Britain's grandest stately homes is believed to have threatened legal action against the Government over a dispute about his £118 million inheritance. The Marquess of Cholmondeley's attempt to give part of his fabulous art collection to the nation in lieu of tax on the largest British inheritance has met resistance from an administration with limited affection for landed sorts. An exotic chap (pictured with actress Isabelle Adjani), who once dated the model Lisa B. Cholmondeley has offered furniture and tapestries to cover duties following his father's death. The works come from Houghton Hall in Norfolk, once the home of his ancestor and the former Prime Minister, Horace Walpole. Over a year ago, the Museums and Galleries Commission, which advises the Government on art, concluded that the items were worth "a very large sum". It made recommendations to the Department of Culture, which has still not responded.

"Lord Cholmondeley is so angry that it's been held up," I am told by an intimate. "A judicial review would be dynamic." It puts the Government on the spot. Since the Government is keen on heritage, it's vital that they get on with this. The problem for Cholmondeley, who still clings to the title Lord Great Chamberlain, is that the Treasury wants to put a cap on the amount of art it accepts in lieu of tax: but art types say this is impossible as it cannot predict how many swells will die a year. The Culture Department blames the delay on the amount of art the marquis is offering. A senior art buff says that if the Government ceases to accept works, "the damage to the nation will be unquantifiable. This is a crucial issue."

● FEARING a repeat of the falling ceiling incident at Buckingham Palace, a former Tory MP, John Watson, has taken out a personal accident insurance policy to cover himself and his family for



A forthcoming visit. My advice to Her Majesty: don't award the higher his OBE.

Home win?

THE most feared referee in football, David Elleray, a housemaster at Harrow, has a clash of fixtures which will prevent him brandishing his cards at this year's World Cup. Elleray insists that "supervisory duties" at Harrow prevent him travelling to France. But I learn of more pressing business in Harrow: Nicholas Bornford, Head Master, is retiring and interviews for the post begin in July. Elleray is a prime candidate.

● PREPARATIONS for next week's European Union summit in York are being hampered by a plague of Eurosceptic bunnies. Lo-

cal worthies decreed that the city should be covered with EU-coloured punnets. They hadn't reckoned with the rabbits which munch huge holes in the flowers at night. Says a parker: "We are trying to plant them faster than they eat them, but it's a losing battle."

Payne-ful plan

ROBERT DE NIRO is popping over to London in the hope of picking up an award for Nobu, a trendy Park Lane trough which he part-owns. I just hope he is not seated next to the much-perfumed Cynthia Payne, a fellow guest. This would be insensitive: the actor



vowed never to return to France after being asked about his alleged links with a prostitution ring.

● LORD WADDINGTON, mourning the demise of his Norfolk terrier in quarantine, has been shopping at Crufts for a new pooch. Basil was following his master to Bermuda, where he was our man in the feathered cap. He died a couple of days short of his six-month stint in clinic. "We were anxious to find a new dog," Lord W tells me. His eye was drawn to a young terrier called Kevin. "Sadly he was not for sale. We are contacting breeders." Lady W is perky: "Our mourning is nearly over."

Hardy bloom

GARDENERS at Dixey Towers have been taken by Justine Waddell (right), who is gracing a TV version of *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. A year after leaving Cambridge, Waddell, whose father starred for the British Lions, landed the title role. Credit goes to Justine's agent. He made clear that the last syllable of "Waddell" should be stressed. This ended confusion with the ageing footballer and former sausage-maker, Chris Waddell.

● PANIC whistled through Whitehall last night as gondola loads of



Euro statesmen arrived for dinner. Tony Blair threw open his doors to leaders, but Robin Cook was unable to welcome Foreign Ministers. The reason? He was having an evening of crisis and beer with socialist sorts. Oodly, Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, was ordered to step in, and was quickly briefed. The FO blames manpower shortages: "There are a lot of guests and a limited number of ministers. We have to spread them around."



HARD DRUGS, SOFT RULES

There should be zero tolerance of heroin in prisons

Some 70 per cent of suspects have drugs in their system when they are arrested. Since only the most serious of offenders are sent to jail, it is perhaps no surprise that prisons are rife with convicts who want to take drugs. What is more surprising is that they can do so with such apparent ease: drugs in prison seem to be almost as readily available as on the street. The Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham, has now accused prisoners of being in the grip of drug barons, as many as ten per cent.

Yesterday Sir David rowed back a little. While it might have been fair a few years ago to say that prison staff turned a blind eye to drugs, it is not so now. Mandatory drug testing and closed circuit televisions have been introduced, while searching has become more frequent, sometimes with sniffer dogs. Now the Prison Service is proposing to ban prisoners from physical contact with visitors if they have been caught with drugs. But that will not stop visitors to other inmates from bringing in drugs. Still drugs are obtainable. In the criminal justice system, the law must surely be upheld.

Drug dealers in jails know that they have a ready market. Anything that makes time pass more quickly or boredom more bearable will be in demand. Some inmates arrive as addicts; many more will leave in that state. Bullying and intimidation are commonplace, and debts are easy to run up and hard to pay off.

Cannabis use has been tolerated in some jails because it calms aggressive prisoners. Heroin, however, has few redeeming features. It is extremely addictive and encourages recidivism. In order to finance a heroin habit, an ex-prisoner is likely either to steal or to deal once out of jail.

Mandatory drug testing, introduced in 1995, may be having a perverse and unintended effect. Because cannabis can be detected in the body up to a month after having been smoked, prisoners are tempted to switch to heroin, which is just as cheap and stays in the system for only 48 hours. Recreational drug users are turned into junkies. A survey by the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence found that, after one year of drug testing among prisoners, the proportion found taking opiates (mainly heroin) had doubled, while the figures for cannabis had dropped by some 20 per cent.

Neither drug should be condoned in jails, but it is surely wrong to design incentives for inmates to move from soft to hard drugs, which do much more harm both to the individuals and to society. For the balance to be tipped the other way, the penalties for being caught with heroin should be toughened relative to those for cannabis.

Prisons should do their best to help those who are already addicts to kick their habits. Too few jails have their own rehabilitation units, where inmates can be treated and kept separate from continuing drug users. For the future, however, the new drug treatment and testing orders in the Crime and Disorder Bill may succeed in keeping addicts out of jail and in helping them off drugs altogether.

Meanwhile, governors must institute a "zero tolerance" regime for heroin. If it means barriers between visitors and inmates for those who have been caught with the drug, so be it. Prisoners should be using jail as a means for coming off hard drugs, not starting a new habit. All the rules, regulations and penalties should be designed with that aim in mind.

THE PEACEFUL CHECHEN

A leader comes to change Britain's view of his country

Ten years ago Aslan Maskhadov was a colonel in the Soviet Army, a proud defender of its formidable reputation and a suspicious opponent of Gorbachev's reforms. Four years ago he was the key guerrilla commander who trained and led Chechen fighters in their war with Moscow. Now he is president of Chechnya, the breakaway republic that inflicted a humiliating defeat on the Russian Army, forcing the last Russian soldier to leave this strategic crossroads of the north Caucasus. His visit to London this week is part of a long-term strategy to win friends, counter Russian propaganda and encourage investment in his ruined country. He has a long haul ahead.

Chechnya today has little to show for its hard-won independence. Much of it, especially the capital Grozny, lies in ruins. No one has yet recognised Chechnya as a sovereign nation and, peace talks with Russia on a final settlement are bogged down. The lack of any economic growth, the abundance of weapons and the breakdown in law and order have turned kidnapping into the most visible growth industry. Camilla Carr and Jon James, two British aid workers, are still held by unknown hostage-takers, despite a huge official reward and presidential efforts to secure their release.

Chechnya has also earned an unenviable reputation — encouraged by sour observations in Moscow — as a centre for smuggling and lawlessness, a fiefdom for warlords and a fertile ground for radical Islam. Only the boldest Western investors are likely to risk their lives and their capital in this rugged landscape. Yet Mr Maskhadov represents the hope that Chechnya can successfully harness its fierce national pride and its natural resources. A sober, practical man, whose integrity is respected by his countrymen and his Russian opponents alike, he insists that he will negotiate with Moscow in good faith and stick to the agreement to freeze the constitutional position until 2001.

He is determined to re-establish the rule of law, and has not hesitated to impose new punishments for hostage-taking — or to invoke harsh precepts of summary Islamic justice to deter crime. As importantly, the Chechen Parliament recently passed decrees outlawing the possession of firearms.

For Chechnya, as for other fully independent former Soviet republics on Russia's southern flank, the challenge of escaping Moscow's hegemony is immensely complicated by oil. Huge new oil and gas fields have been found in the Caspian, the Caucasus and Central Asia. The geography of pipeline construction will determine for years ahead control of these strategic reserves and the receipt of enormous royalty income. Moscow's tenacious attempt to hold on to Chechnya was largely determined by the territory's control of a strategic pipeline; its murky intrigues in the Transcaucasus are similarly motivated.

But the common need to maximise oil revenues is an incentive to both Moscow and Grozny to negotiate a *modus vivendi*. That is unlikely to include heavy Russian investment; Mr Maskhadov can have no realistic expectation that Moscow will make good its promises of reparations to rebuild the country's infrastructure. But Chechnya is rich in minerals, forestry — and determination. If Mr Maskhadov can rein in the criminal gangs profiting from Chechnya's misery, the skyline of Grozny may, in a few years, look less like Dresden in 1946. Outside investment does not wait for the settling of constitutional questions; but it does demand a framework of stability and an expectation of prosperity. Mr Maskhadov, who sought and obtained a meeting with Margaret Thatcher as another symbol of patriotic resolution, believes that, freed from the yoke of Soviet communism in which he once believed, his people can bring stability to the entire region. If they achieve that, they will have won not just the war, but the peace.

THE NME WITHIN

Cool Britannia has lost its Verve

In their expensively-trashed hotel rooms, nursing a collective hangover after the euphoria of last May, Britain's rock stars have at last woken up to smell the coffee. And it's turned cold. In this week's *New Musical Express* the groups have turned on the new Labour Government. Under the banner headline "Ever had the feeling you've been cheated?", a dole-fuelled queue of musicians line up to condemn Tony Blair for selling out more quickly than Oasis at Knebworth.

Four issues are highlighted as evidence of betrayal: the introduction of student tuition fees, the abolition of the automatic right to the dole, curfews, and opposition to drug law reform. Their anger may be sincere but their judgment is all to pot. To paraphrase Noel Gallagher, where were they when Tony Blair was getting the highest poll ratings in history? Mr Blair got all his betrayals in history? Mr Blair got near No 10. Labour is only before he ever got near No 10. Labour is only doing in Opposition what it said it would do in Opposition and the stars cannot do in Opposition deliver what was on complain if ministers deliver what was on all the pre-election packaging.

Rock stars may have had the wrong idea about Mr Blair because he was once himself in a band and proclaimed himself a "modern man". But the Prime Minister cannot be blamed if they could not see he was also a Christian traditionalist with a huge streak of social moralism. He has always been more Cliff Richard than Keith

Richards. As a politician, of course, he is no more going to reject overtures from musicians than they would ignore a high-paying record executive because he had the wrong haircut.

The Prime Minister never hid his authoritarian instincts; so it is no more than an admission of ignorance to cut up rough now. Rock stars need to be rebels. But, among noble causes, asking the Government to make it easier to acquire the mighty joint does not quite rank alongside opposition to the Vietnam War. Nor does the sight of a man called Nigel in a leather miniskirt tipping an ice bucket over a defenceless Pauline Prescott sit proudly in the protest tradition of Woody Guthrie.

Mr Blair should not worry that rock stars have now become the NME within. He needed a few enemies, aside from Arthur Scargill, if he was to make his mark. Compassion with a hard edge was always, sooner or later, going to alienate the soft-headed. There was only one person apart from the angry musicians who imagined that Mr Blair was really a hard leftie all along and, when in power, would embark on a wild spending spree and let it all hang out: that was Dr Brian Mawhinney.

If there is one lesson ministers might learn, it is not to be too eager to see their image reflected in the glass of fashion. Put not your trust in artists formerly known as Princes.

West's response to Serb aggression

From Ms Jill Craigie and others

Sir, As the war that Milosevic unleashed in former Yugoslavia is now extended by him to Kosovo (Kosovo in Serbian), with the grim possibility of its spreading to Macedonia and beyond, we once again witness destruction of villages, torture and summary execution of civilians and enforced displacement of the indigenous population.

Suppression of Kosovo's political autonomy and denial of basic civil rights to its Albanian population were the foundation-stone of Milosevic's power in Serbia. Practically overnight Albanians were dismissed from their jobs, denied education in their own language, deprived of basic welfare and exposed to unchecked state terror.

Kosovo became a *de facto* Serbian colony. Yet for almost a decade the population and its leaders have remained committed to passive resistance in the hope that the international community would deliver a just solution. Not only has this not happened, but the prospect of it ever happening has, since Dayton, receded into an indefinite future. Popular armed resistance has been the predictable consequence.

The West has hitherto chosen to accept Belgrade's claim that Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia, despite Yugoslavia's dissolution. Unconditional possession of Kosovo by Serbia, however, was not sanctioned by the Yugoslav Constitution, under which Kosovo was explicitly tied to the Federation as such, being one of its eight members.

This provision was not accidental. Peace in the former Yugoslavia was ensured precisely by increasing Kosovo's autonomy from Serbia, until the two became purely nominal. Kosovo's desire to leave Serbia is thus not "separatism", but a politically valid and juridically defensible response to the break-up of Yugoslavia.

The longer Serbia is allowed to hold on to Kosovo, moreover, the more violent and unstable it is itself going to become, and with it the Balkans as a whole. For it can never become a democratic country while it rules Kosovo against its will. But Western politicians still seem unwilling to confront the real issue. They describe the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) as "terrorists", although the term applies better to a State that terrorises its own citizens, as Serbia has been doing in Kosovo, than to those resisting its wanton violence.

The emergence of the KLA is merely a symptom of how intolerable the situation in Kosovo has become. The simple truth is that continuing Balkan turmoil can be avoided only by Kosovo's removal from Serbian jurisdiction.

Yours etc,
JILL CRAIGIE,
MICHAEL FOOT,
ADRIAN HASTINGS,
REGINALD HIBBERT,
QUINTIN HOARE,
BRANKA MAGAS,
SALMAN RUSHDIE,
c/o 6 St Quintin Gardens,
London W10 6AS,
March 11.

From Mrs P. Atkins

Sir, In the recent events in Kosovo, we have been given a lot of information about the atrocities that the Serbian regime commits against the Albanian population. I feel that the stories are one-sided. Why is so little attention paid to the reason for Serbs fleeing from Kosovo, where once they were a majority?

Kosovo was not the only autonomous province that lost its independence, so was Vojvodina, but they do not have clashes there. What about Albanian aspirations for creating "Great Albania", which as well as Albania and Kosovo, includes parts of Macedonia?

Yours sincerely,
P. ATKINS,
436 Bideford Green,
Linslade, Bedfordshire LU7 7TZ,
March 11.

Diet and health

From Mrs C. M. Schofield

Sir, With news of yet another change of medical advice from our parliamentary experts (report, "Dobson forced to eat his words on red meat", March 6) might I suggest the best and, in fact, only necessary recommendation we should heed is to eat and drink anything in moderation but do not listen to experts. It could cause stress or, worse, acute lifelong misery.

Yours faithfully,
JULIA SCHOFIELD,
Scotsdene, Hill Road,
Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2JN,
cnscho15@aol.com
March 6.

Spare cash

From Mr Michael Harman

Sir, I do not find it surprising that 90 per cent of legal aid is "swallowed up" by lawyers' fees" (leading article, March 5). But I do wonder what happens to the remaining 10 per cent.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL HARMAN,
Holmwood, 37 Upper Park Road,
Camberley, Surrey GU15 2EG,
March 5.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Catholicism in a modern democracy

From the Right Reverend Vincent Nichols, Roman Catholic Bishop in North London

Sir, In arguing that "a modern, democratic leader" should not be a Roman Catholic, the Bishop of Rochester, Michael Nazir-Ali (article, March 9; see also letters, March 7 and 10), seems to judge the Catholic Church by the norms of liberal democracy. But there should surely always be a critical distance between church teaching and the expectations of any particular political culture.

An eminent former Bishop of Rochester, St John Fisher, also struggled with this critical distance. He was executed in 1535 for his loyalty to Rome, yet stated clearly that many of Rome's ways did not appeal to him, nor to his compatriots. His question in the end was not whether the teaching of the Catholic Church would win popular support, but whether it contained the imperative of truth.

Yours faithfully,
VINCENT NICHOLS,
Westminster House,
Watford Way, Hendon, NW4 4TY,
March 9.

From Father Paul Beaumont

Sir, Michael Nazir-Ali's article only confirms Cardinal Newman's observation: "I do not disguise the fact that Catholicism is a different religion from Anglicanism."

There is a world of difference between a Church that has the historic credentials to teach with authority

and one that is a debating society. For a Christian Church the mark of authenticity is more important than the claim to be modern.

Yours sincerely,
P. BEAUMONT,
Parish House, 53 Leigh Road,
Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 9DD,
March 9.

From Mr Michael Clarke

Sir, In reality most people choose a Church primarily because of its way of worship and adopt an *à la carte* attitude to its teachings.

As the Church of England, hijacked by the "born again" tendency, seems to be rapidly abandoning the beauty of holiness for the banality of informality, the attraction of Rome's liturgical worship is bound to grow.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL CLARKE,
Flat 10, Lansdowne,
Carlton Drive, SW15 2BY,
March 9.

From Father Bryan Storey

Sir, Maybe Tony Blair could be among the many who would find themselves on the road to Rome after reading Bishop Nazir-Ali's idea of what it is to be modern.

Yours truly,
BRYAN STOREY,
Chy an Pronger,
Trewarment,
Tintagel, Cornwall PL34 0ET,
March 9.

Should Royals bow to reform?

From Mr Mike Howson

Sir, The annual spectacle of the State Opening of Parliament is one of which our nation can be justly proud. The symbol of the monarch demonstrating the democratic link between the Crown, Parliament and the people is fundamental to our parliamentary democracy.

I regard any suggestion that the pomp and ceremony of the occasion be watered down in the public interest as misguided, and I believe that the spectacle of our Queen travelling to Parliament in a horse-drawn State Coach rather than a car meets with the overwhelming support of our citizens.

The modernisation programme being undertaken by the inner circle of the Royal Family (reports, March 7 and 9) is starting to reap reward in terms of public opinion. Meanwhile, the State Opening should be retained for generations to come, as a glittering reflection of all that is good about our British constitution.

Yours faithfully,
MIKE HOWSON,
Kreta Maris,
73 Westwood Park Drive,
Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8NW,
March 9.

From Mr Martin Graham

Sir, It is very important that reforms to the monarchy are not guided by those who have no liking for the institution in any case. It would be like a Chinese restaurant having its menu subjected to change by people that do

not like Chinese food, only to spoil it for those that do.

Yours faithfully,
MARTIN GRAHAM,
All Saints Cottage, Upper Street,
Hollingbourne, Kent ME17 1UJ.

From Mr James J. Blake Joss

Sir, If the Royal Family is to adapt to public opinion, can we now look to the termination of the unseemly practice of foreign tennis players at Wimbledon having to bow or curtsy to whom-ever is sitting in the royal box?

Yours faithfully,
JAMES JOSSE,
12a Seckford Street,
Woodbridge, Suffolk IP21 4LY,
March 9.

From the Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire

Sir, You report (March 9) that "By tradition [lord-lieutenants] are retired military officers." The tradition, for which there was a sound basis, has long since faded.

Of the 36 lord-lieutenants in England and Wales only ten could be described as retired military officers, and even they should not be stereotyped as having an inordinate love of tradition. At least 20 of us are, or have been, businessmen — and there are four female lord-lieutenants.

Yours faithfully,
HUGO BRUNNER,
Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire,
26 Northam Road, Oxford OX2 6SF,
March 10.

Tuition fees

From Mr Adrian Ross Yalland

Sir, Yesterday at Question Time the Prime Minister defended Labour's higher education policy by pointing out that students from poor families are rightly protected from the imposition of tuition fees. Yet he seemed unwilling or unable to answer questions relating to the phasing-out of the mandatory grant.

What is the point of protecting the poorest from the cost of a new tuition fee whilst forcing the same students (presumably those who are unlikely to enjoy the same financial support from their parents as their better-off colleagues) into borrowing the full cost of maintenance? Surely middle England

will simply dig deeper into their pockets to help their children, whilst the poor have no choice but to get into greater debt, or not attend university.

Mr Blair and his colleagues made several categorical statements last April that Labour had no plans to introduce tuition fees and that the cost of tuition must be met exclusively by the State. How can he now flatly deny this in the Commons?

Many of my fellow students at university who voted for Labour on May 1 on the strength of those promises feel completely betrayed.

Yours sincerely,
ADRIAN YALLAND,
356 Old Heath Road,
Colchester, Essex CO2 5DD,
March 5.

No charge for Hagues

From Mr Jeremy Page

Sir, I found the News in Brief item (March 5) regarding the Hagues' non-prosecution over an out-of-date tax disc staggering. If, as reported, two police forces cannot agree on whose responsibility it is to prosecute, where does that leave us?

Does it mean that if I commit murder in, say, Manchester no action will be taken because neither West Sussex nor Greater Manchester police can agree?

Yours faithfully,
J. PAGE,
50 George V Avenue,
Worthing, West Sussex BN11 5RL,
March 5.

Unlucky for some

From Mrs Anne Gordon-Gillies

Sir, I suggest to Mr Simon Rostron (letter, March 7; see also letter, March 11) that on Friday the 13th he stays in bed preparing himself for Sunday the 15th, which is the Ides of March.

Yours faithfully,
ANNE GORDON-GILLIES,
The Coach House, Broadgait,
Gullane, East Lothian EH31 2DH.

Strain of matching lottery awards

From Mr Timothy Finn

Sir, Many National Lottery grants require successful applicants to contribute a proportion of matching funds. The basis of this excellent principle is that each project should demonstrate support from its own community. But on a grant of, say, £2 million the levels of 25 per cent and 35 per cent which normally apply to arts and sports grants are uncomfortably high for applicants such as a local concert hall or clubhouse. Thus a group is virtually obliged to look beyond its own horizons towards national grant-making trusts.

At least one such trust has recently announced its withdrawal from matching-funds contributions. This stance, no doubt reluctantly adopted, is understandable. The more money a trust contributes to lottery-supported causes the less it has for deserving causes elsewhere.

A matching-funds requirement of 10 per cent would be more sensible in relation to most communities' fundraising capabilities. Certainly fewer lottery awards would be made, because grants would need to be larger. However, this reduction in numbers would be offset by the greater use of trusts' resources on projects they have identified for themselves.

As things stand now, the norms for matching funds place unintended strains on trust giving and probably overestimate the realistic level of community support.

Yours sincerely,
TIMOTHY FINN
(Managing Director),
Collyer Finn Ltd
(Fundraising Services),
38 Churchgate Street,
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1RB,
March 9.

Windsor heritage

From the Director of the National Portrait Gallery

Sir, I am mildly baffled that Mr G. A. Christodoulou (letter, March 5) should express disappointment that the National Portrait Gallery has acquired Gerald Brockhurst's portrait of the Duchess of Windsor. We were delighted, not least because it was one of the very few items in the sale which went for a figure close to its estimate.

It is surely much the best way of commemorating her that the portrait which hung over the Windsor's mantelpiece in their home in the Bois de Boulogne should be acquired by a national collection which last year had nearly 900,000 visitors.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES SAUMAREZ SMITH,
Director,
The National Portrait Gallery,
St Martin's Place, WC2H 0HE,
csaumarezsmith@npg.org.uk
March 5.

From Mr Edward Fuller

Sir, Mr Christodoulou questions the money spent on acquiring the portrait of the Duchess of Windsor for the National Portrait Gallery, suggesting that the Duke's investiture sword and Garter banner would be a more fitting reminder to the nation of what he gave up.

Evidently the Duke, as Edward VIII, prized Mrs Simpson above the sword, banner, throne and nation. Surely it is more important for future generations to see what — and who — could lead him to such a momentous choice.

Sincerely,
EDWARD FULLER,
Springfield Farm, Buckhorn Weston,
Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5HX,
efuller@aol.com
March 5.

Cromwell's skulls

From Mr Simon Hardwick

Sir, I understand that controversy has revived over the rival claims to authenticity of the skulls of Oliver Cromwell held respectively by Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and a private family in Kent. Could this not be settled by DNA testing?

The skulls could possibly be compared to the Lord Protector's immured headless remains at Newburgh Priory, Yorkshire, which were placed there after the ejection of his body from Westminster Abbey in 1660.

What an opportunity might then arise for the restoration to its rightful place of the unified body of our greatest parliamentarian — should his descendants so wish.

Yours truly,
SIMON HARDWICK,
Poleshill Cottage, Langford Budville,
Wellington, Somerset TA21 0RX,
jhardwick@argonet.co.uk
March 3.

Farmyard brains

From Mr William Marshall

Sir, The broad, noble brow, the clear eyed, analytical stare, the well-set ears, the high forehead, all support the idea that pigs are the Einsteins of the farmyard (report, March 9). I have many intellectual friends who share the same features. And wouldn't look amiss honking around the odd sty.

Yours,
WILLIAM MARSHALL,
41 The Drive, E4 7AJ,
March 9.

OBITUARIES

LLOYD BRIDGES

Lloyd Bridges, American screen and stage actor, died in Los Angeles on March 10 aged 85. He was born in San Leandro, California, on January 15, 1913.

Although he never achieved true stardom, never won an Oscar and rarely appeared in the gossip columns, Lloyd Bridges succeeded where so many actors fail: he was hardly ever out of work. In a career that spanned five decades, his roles ranged from Shakespeare to roaring farces, from westerns to melodrama. He rarely gave a poor performance.



Confrontation: Bridges, right, as the devious and self-seeking deputy to Gary Cooper's beleaguered town marshal in *High Noon* (1952).

After a career on the Broadway stage and a string of roles in B pictures Bridges came to greater prominence in the early 1950s, and seemed to be on the road to stardom. But a previous association with a left-wing theatre group was enough to draw upon him the unwelcome scrutiny of the House Un-American Activities Committee and his career faltered, never really to recover its momentum.

His father had had his way, Lloyd Bridges would probably have become a lawyer. He survived an early brush with fame in infancy when President William Howard Taft awarded him a trophy for being the fattest baby in America. Weight problems did not persist and he was majoring in pre-law at the University of California at Los Angeles when he joined the university's dramatic society.

In his late sixties Bridges discovered a previously unsuspected talent for broad comedy. He continued to play dramatic roles but he may well be best remembered for his hilarious performances as an air traffic controller in *Airplane!* (1980) and *Airplane II* (1982), and as the brain-dead admiral in *Hot Shots!* (1991).

mist hysteria was gathering strength in Hollywood in the early 1950s. Bridges' radical past brought him to the attention of the House Un-American Activities Committee. He admitted to the committee that he had, in the past, been a member of the Communist Party, and was called to give evidence to the second round of the committee's hearings on left-wing activity in Hollywood. It further emerged that Bridges had been a member of the Actors' Lab, a radical theatre group which staged plays in Hollywood in the 1940s. These facts were sufficient to get him onto the cinema industry's blacklist. Though he was cleared by the FBI, his career was now becalmed and for the next few years he was restricted to appearing in low-budget films from independent producers.

Lloyd Bridges turned back to the stage for a time but was tempted to return to Hollywood in 1956 for *The Rainmaker* with Katharine Hepburn and Burt Lancaster. After that performance and a subsequent role in *The Goddess* (1958), true fame on the big screen seemed again within grasp. Instead, Bridges decided to star in a syndicated television series called *Sea Hunt*, in which he played a daredevil skindiver, who spends most of the time underwater. The series was such a success that he changed his mind about leaving after his 12-month contract and stayed until 1961. It brought him in \$1 million a year.

For the last 30 years of his life Bridges oscillated successfully and happily between stage, screen and television, steadily stretching his list of credits but never reaching the heights. He appeared several times with his two actor sons, Beau and Jeff, notably in *The Wild Pair* (1987) and *Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988).

In his late sixties Bridges discovered a previously unsuspected talent for broad comedy. He continued to play dramatic roles but he may well be best remembered for his hilarious performances as an air traffic controller in *Airplane!* (1980) and *Airplane II* (1982), and as the brain-dead admiral in *Hot Shots!* (1991).

In private life Bridges was dedicated to social causes, especially the eradication of world hunger, and in 1988 led a fact-finding mission to drought-stricken sub-Saharan Africa as a special envoy for the charity CARE.

He is survived by his wife Dorothy, his son Beau and Jeff, both substantial film actors in their own right, and by his daughter.

SIR JAMES TAIT

Sir James Tait, electrical engineer, died on February 13 aged 85. He was born on June 13, 1912.



JAMES TAIT will be remembered as the creator and first Vice-Chancellor of City University in London. He not only managed the successful transformation of an old-style polytechnic into a new university, but also oversaw considerable expansion both in student numbers and in the range of subjects available for study.

Born the son of an estate gardener in the village of Ochiltree in Ayrshire, James Sharp Tait left the village school at the age of 14 to take up an apprenticeship with the Kilmarnock firm, Glenfield and Kennedy. He pursued his engineering education in the evenings. His hard work led to a scholarship to the Royal Technical College in Glasgow, to distinction in his examinations, and to a lectureship there.

He left Glasgow in 1946, having both gained his PhD from Glasgow University and married Mary Linton. To become head of a department meant coming south, first to Portsmouth Municipal College, and only a year later to the institution which was to make his name: the Northampton Polytechnic (situated in Northampton Square, Islington). He became its head in 1957, following a 'detour' as Principal of Woolwich Polytechnic for six years.

The decade was one of keen interest in technological education, as Britain re-invented itself after the war. The premier technical colleges were redesignated Colleges of Advanced Technology. Northampton Polytechnic among them.

One of the strengths of the Colleges of Advanced Technology was the 'sandwich' method of engineering education: periods of six months in college alternated with six-month periods of training in industry. It produced high quality engineers with invaluable applied skills. Tait for 'JST' as he was usually known in the college) was one of its strongest exponents, claiming venerable Scottish antecedents for the system.

He made it the basis of Northampton College of Advanced Technology's contribution to the 1960s' great expansion of engineering education. He laid the plans for new heavy engineering laboratories at the college that even today provide a unique combination of first-rate experimental resources in London. He was an outstanding administrator, with the vision to guide genuine academic development.

The achievements of the Colleges of Advanced Technology were noted in the 1963 Robbins report on higher education, which recommended that they should gain university status. Despite pressures on the Northampton CAT to achieve this by a merger within London University, Tait had other plans. He saw the potential of forming a second university in London to work in close association with industry, commerce, and the financial institutions of the City of London. The Northampton location just north of the City was ideal — but how to achieve the necessary connection with the City fathers was not obvious.

With Oliver Thompson of Shell, Tait conceived a brilliant link whereby the Lord Mayor of London "for the time being" would ex-officio be Chancellor of the new univer-

sity. Thus, in 1966, the Northampton became the City University with a uniquely — a Chancellor who changes every year.

In 1969 James Tait was knighted. He led the expansion of the university into new academic disciplines, notably social sciences and business studies, which now contribute strongly to the university's profile. However, his dedication to engineering may have resulted in a failure to diversify rapidly enough, so that when the industrial base underpinning sandwich education collapsed in the 1970s, the university found itself over-provided in this area. Nonetheless, Tait's tenure of office, which lasted until 1974, saw his institution grow from an engineering polytechnic with some 800 full-time and 1,200 part-time students, to a fully fledged university with 3,000 undergraduates and post-graduates.

Tait will be remembered for his warmth and his integrity. He was proud of his Scottish origins and he never lost either his accent or his characteristic dry humour. His connection with the scouting movement, begun at an early age, was to see him appointed scoutmaster to the troop attached to the Presbyterian Church in Richmond, not far from Teddington, where he settled with his family.

His wife, Mary survives him, with two sons and a daughter.

ARKADI SHEVCHENKO

Arkadi Shevchenko, Soviet defector, was found dead at his home in Washington on February 28 aged 61, having apparently suffered a heart attack. He was born in the Ukraine.

WITH his highly publicised defection to the United States in April 1978, Arkadi Shevchenko became the most senior Russian diplomat to have gone over to the West. A high-flying protégé of the veteran Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, he had since 1973 held the post of Under Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs at the United Nations, in which capacity he was not only the UN's highest-ranking Soviet official but was effectively number two to the Secre-

tary-General, Kurt Waldheim. His defection, which followed a refusal to return to Moscow when summoned back on "official business", was potentially embarrassing for the United Nations, for he at first refused to relinquish his post, citing Article 100 of the UN Charter which guarantees the political independence and integrity of its staff. He insisted that he had no need to seek political asylum as long as he remained at the UN on a valid contract and visa. This may have been strictly true, but the allocation of UN posts has always reflected the realities of world politics (with Shevchenko's own job, for instance, traditionally in the gift of the Soviet regime), and there was no precedent for an official remaining in post after declaring himself out of sympathy

with his national government. He stuck to his diplomatic position for a fortnight, before finally resigning on April 26. But the consequences of his action went beyond any possible awkwardness for the UN. Shevchenko was an expert on disarmament, privy to every detail of the Soviet negotiating position in arms limitation and reduction discussions over many years. His defection became known just as the US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance was en route to Moscow for another round of SALT talks, and a matter of weeks before the American and Soviet heads of state were due to discuss disarmament at a special UN session in New York. Arkadi Shevchenko was the son of a doctor. From 1949 to 1954 he was a student at the Moscow State Institute of

International Relations, many of whose graduates went on to occupy senior positions in the Soviet administration, especially in the Foreign Ministry. Pursuing postgraduate research on disarmament, Shevchenko collaborated with a fellow student on an article about "the role of parliaments in the quest for peace". The fellow student was the son of Andrei Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister, to whom the article was shown. Gromyko was sufficiently impressed to recommend Shevchenko for a job in the Foreign Ministry, which he took up in 1956. A sincere Stalinist until Stalin's death, he proved adept at coping with subsequent changes of ideology and approach on the part of the Soviet regime, and his career soon prospered. In 1957 he was involved in monitoring disar-

mament discussions taking place under UN auspices in London. Three years later he was one of the advisory team accompanying the Soviet leader Khrushchev to a UN session in New York. Quick-tempered and sure of his own worth, he did little to endear himself to his subordinates or his peers, but his superiors were impressed. By the time he was 40 he had attained the rank of ambassador — the youngest Russian ever to do so, he liked to boast — and in 1963 he was assigned to the Soviet mission at the UN, where he remained until 1970.

After three years back in Moscow as political adviser to his patron Gromyko, he returned to New York to take up the post of Under Secretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs. He was already thought — not least by himself — to be destined for yet greater things, and he was spoken of as a future Deputy Foreign Minister and even as a potential successor to Gromyko.

In 1975, however, just after his UN contract had been renewed for a further two years, he approached the Americans and asked for political asylum. The CIA, realising how useful he could be to them, asked him to prove his seriousness by staying in place for a while at the UN and passing them information. He was reluctant to comply, but realised that he had little choice, given that his would be ruined if the Americans were to make his initial approaches known. He thus spent two and a half years as a rather unwilling spy before defecting when it seemed that discovery might be imminent.



Shevchenko swearing the oath to become an American citizen in Washington on February 28, 1986

That, at least, was one version of events. It was more or less the version Shevchenko stuck to himself, and it was broadly accepted as true by many in the West. But there were some intelligence pundits who were unconvinced — predictably, perhaps, in a world built on duplicity and suspicion — and who questioned how useful spying he had really done.

If there were doubts about his actions, there were doubts, too, about the purity of his motives. By his own account, he defected because he had long been disillusioned with the corrupt reality of the Soviet regime: the higher he climbed, the more he was sickened by the hypocrisy of the scheming, over-hungry elite whose behaviour he had been able to observe at close quarters. Others — prominent among them his personal assistant at the UN, widely held to be a KGB "minder", were quick to counter that view of events with rumours of drink and

marital problems, of insatiable greed for money, of vast and thwarted ambition. The Russians insisted that he was acting "under duress". There were suggestions that he had been an American agent all along, suggestions, too, that he was still a Soviet plant. Shevchenko went into hiding, his wife and daughter having already returned to Moscow. His new identity was revealed by the NBC television network just six months later. After a woman working for a Washington escort agency announced that he had been paying her \$5,000 a week and had taken her on holiday to the Virgin Islands, he was "relocated" once more by the CIA, but eventually ended up living openly in a Washington suburb.

As relations between the Americans and the Russians grew more tense during the Reagan presidency, Shevchenko was much in demand in the US as a lecturer and commentator on disarmament and Soviet affairs. He appeared frequently on television talk shows, and could charge up to \$12,000 for addressing business leaders. In 1985 he gave an account of his experiences in a book, *Breaking with Moscow*. Notable for its vivid pen-portraits of the Soviet leadership and its insights into their thinking — and for its claim that half the 700-strong Russian contingent at the UN were working for the KGB — the volume was a great success, selling 175,000 copies in its first 14 weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list and being serialised in newspapers and magazines around the world.

Shevchenko enjoyed his high public profile. He advised the Reagan Administration in its preparations for the Geneva arms talks, and at one point there was even talk of a film based on his life. He became an American citizen in February 1986. With the collapse of communism, however, and the break-up of the Soviet Union, interest in the life and opinions of Russian defectors began to wane, and in his last years Shevchenko became something of a recluse. He was at work on a history of Soviet foreign policy at the time of his death.

Arkadi Shevchenko's first wife committed suicide in Moscow a month after his defection (though he would always insist that she had been "eliminated" by the KGB). They had a son and a daughter. In December 1978 he married his American second wife Elaine Jackson, whom he had met six weeks before. She died of cancer. He is survived by his children and by his third wife Natasha.

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GORBACHOV TAKES OFFICE WITH PLEA FOR ARMS ACCORD

From Richard Owen, Moscow

The Kremlin leadership underwent a swift and potentially drastic transformation in the course of a single day yesterday, with the death of President Chernenko at the age of 73 announced in the afternoon and Mikhail Gorbachov, aged 54, installed as the new leader by the evening.

In a speech to the Central Committee, Mr Gorbachov said Moscow wanted agreement with America at the Geneva arms talks which open today, observing: "The peoples of the world would sigh with relief". Russia wanted an end to missile deployments in space and on earth and a nuclear freeze. An agreement "on an honest and equitable basis" was the only reasonable way out, but it was up to America to understand Moscow's position and respond in kind.

Mr Gorbachov was elected at a speedily-convened emergency session of the Central Committee. He was nominated by Mr Andrei Gromyko, the veteran Foreign Minister, who although a member of the Kremlin "old guard", has long favoured a transition to Mr

ON THIS DAY

March 12, 1985

There is now little news devoted to Mikhail Gorbachov, but he will always be remembered as the president who put glasnost ('openness') and perestroika ('restructuring') in the world's headlines.

Gorbachov. In his speech Mr Gorbachov said his administration would pursue détente and "respond to goodwill with goodwill, to trust with trust. But everyone should know that we shall never waive the interest of our motherland or our allies".

Moscow also wanted good relations with Peking, and this was quite possible, "given reciprocity".

Soviet television showed Mr Gorbachov leading the Politburo at President Chernenko's lying-in-state at the Hall of Columns near Red Square, and comforting Mr Chernenko's relatives.

The death of President Chernenko was

announced "with deep sorrow" on television by a black-suited announcer at 1400 Moscow time after menacing speculation following the sudden recall of top Soviet party leaders from America, Yugoslavia and West Germany. The statement said Mr Chernenko had died at 1920 Moscow time on Sunday, "after a grave illness". A medical report signed by Kremlin doctors confirmed that Mr Chernenko had long suffered from emphysema, a lung complaint. It said he died of heart failure following the deterioration of his lungs and liver. His condition had been worsened by chronic hepatitis which developed into cirrhosis.

In an address to the Soviet people, the Kremlin called on Russians to "rally even closer round the party in its hour of grave loss". There was regret but little grief at the passing of Mr Chernenko, who ruled for just over a year, coupled with expectation that the reform-minded Mr Gorbachov would revive far-reaching innovations begun by President Andropov before his death last year.

Mr Chernenko's death occurred on the eve of the new Geneva arms talks, but Soviet officials said the Soviet-American dialogue would continue as planned. Diplomats said the return to dialogue was the main achievement of Mr Chernenko's 13 months in power.

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft THURSDAY MARCH 12 1998

George flies with doves to avert rate rise

By Janet Bush, Economics Editor

EDDIE GEORGE, Governor of the Bank of England, used his casting vote on the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to prevent a rise in interest rates last month. The eight members were divided evenly on the issue.

The minutes of the February meeting showed that opinion in favour of a further increase in rates had hardened slightly since January, when five of the eight MPC members voted for the status quo. Last month, Mervyn King, Deputy Governor and chief economist, switched sides, deciding to join the hawkish camp.

Base rates were again left unchanged when the MPC met this month.

The impact of February's split decision on rates was felt immediately in the foreign exchange market, where sterling jumped to its highest level against the mark for seven weeks. It was quoted in late European trading at DM2.070, against DM2.065 on Tuesday.

Economists at Greenwich NatWest said: "Every 'one view' in the minutes is quickly followed by 'another view' suggesting that the MPC's deliberations are becoming increasingly heated."

The analysis of retail sales in November and December is a good example of how deeply split the MPC now is.

The minutes showed one camp arguing that "the slowdown in recorded sales was temporary", while another said that "there has been a longer-lasting slowdown in retail sales growth".

The doves on the MPC are arguing that the economy is already slowing and that the impact of the economic crisis in Asia could threaten a very sharp slowdown. The hawks believe that, without the effect of the strong pound, which could easily go into reverse, and the disinflationary impact of Asian inflation in Britain would be much higher and ought to be tackled.

Mr George continues to have the power of a casting vote on the MPC until John Vickers, the Oxford economist, joins later this year as the ninth member.



George casting vote



David Carter-Johnson, of Fosters, the menswear chain, with his management team at the time of the buyout from Sears for £1 in 1992

Pensions mis-selling bill expected to reach £9bn

By Caroline Merrick

THE Government is expected to reveal today that the total bill for compensating those that have been mis-sold personal pensions could be as high as £9 billion, more than double the original estimate of £4 billion.

The revised figure is to be announced at the same time as the Financial Services Authority, the new super regulator, orders companies to review a possible further £5 million personal pension mis-selling cases.

In tandem with the announcement, Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the

Treasury, is to make a Commons statement concerning the second stage of the personal pensions review.

Anyone who was encouraged to give up their rights to, or transfer out of, an occupational scheme, to take up a personal pension could be a victim of mis-selling. According to estimates, up to one in three personal pensions may have been mis-sold.

Today's move is in addition to the original review of 500,000 mis-selling cases ordered more than three years ago. Already the bill for compensating these people is more than £4 billion. Victims include the dead, the retired and

those over the age of 35. This review is now finally reaching a conclusion.

The second stage of the process will focus on the so-called non-priority cases — those under the age of 35. It has been estimated that a pension for this second group of mis-selling victims could cost another £4 billion to £5 billion.

The painful process of dealing with compensation has become the focus of a "naming and shaming" campaign by Ms Liddell. It was only when Ms Liddell began to name those that were being dilatory in sorting out their mis-selling problems, that the process of

paying compensation was given priority.

Many companies have been fined for failing to meet deadlines set by the regulators for paying compensation. These companies include Friends Provident, Countrywide, and DBS Financial Management, the UK's biggest network of independent financial advisers. The highest fine, at £25,000, was levied against London & Manchester.

Ms Liddell's targets have included Prudential, the UK's biggest insurance company. Prudential had the highest number of priority cases. Yesterday it finally finished dealing with compensation for

these victims. A quirk in the regulatory system means that Prudential, however, has so far escaped a fine.

In an effort to impress on companies the importance of dealing with the new review, the regulator is expected to drop the phrase "non-priority" from the process. Instead it will be simply called phase two.

Already many companies have had to double their financial provisions against mis-selling. Phase two is sure to inflict a heavier toll on many companies' balance sheets. Prudential had to increase its mis-selling provisions to £450 million.

Threat to 1,700 jobs in Fosters collapse

By Fraser Nelson

FOSTERS, the menswear chain that was considering a £40 million flotation last year, has gone into administration after a year of rapid decline — putting 1,700 jobs at risk.

The company, which was bought from Sears for £1 by a management buyout team in 1992, said demand for its jeans and casual shirts had been crushed by the popularity of sportswear and designer labels.

Many of its 175 stores are expected to close, with the loss of more than 500 jobs, during a three-month review. David Carter-Johnson, who led the buyout, is staying with the company for the time being.

The financial turmoil at Fosters comes half-way through Mr Carter-Johnson's plan to ditch the company's image of cheap suits and concentrate on own-brand "FTC" jeans for young men. In the past year it has closed 40 smaller shops, but still held turnover at £90 million.

Four months ago, Mr Carter-Johnson was complaining that 60 per cent of profits came from 50 of its stores.

A City analyst said: "Even the guys at the bottom end of the menswear market are saving their money for a Ben Sherman shirt and Polo Ralph Lauren top. The market has been going that way for years and Fosters has not kept track."

BDO Stoy Hayward, the receiver, is looking to revive the business rather than find buyers. It said: "Fosters does not have a large 'For Sale' sign saying any retailers can get us. We are going to keep cutting costs so Fosters can continue trading."

Fosters was formed in 1876, floated in 1951 and bought by Sears in 1985.

Commentary, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	6520.1	(+1.3)
Yield	2.79%	
FTSE All share	2710.59	(+3.85)
Nikkei	10755.14	(-226.65)
New York		
Dow Jones	8880.74	(+37.82)*
S&P Composite	1083.25	(+4.04)*
US DOLLAR		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	102 1/2%	(102 1/2%)
Yield	5.85%	(5.85%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-mth Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Libor long gth	107 1/4%	(107 1/4%)
Kuwait (3m)		
STERLING		
New York	1.6470*	(1.6413)
London		
\$	1.5447	(1.6387)
DM	3.0207	(3.0007)
FF	15.1290	(15.0220)
SFr	2.4550	(2.4430)
Yen	212.72	(209.24)
\$ Index	106.1	(105.4)
EURO DOLLAR		
London		
DM	1.8340*	(1.8280)
FF	6.1850*	(6.1275)
SFr	1.4918*	(1.4850)
Yen	129.22*	(127.35)
\$ Index	109.3	(108.8)
Tokyo close Yen 128.23		
ASIAN DOLLAR		
Brent 15-day (May)	\$13.45	(\$13.35)
SOX		
London close	\$295.35	(\$294.75)

* denotes midday trading price

Schroders shares hit after £32m provision revealed

By Richard Miles

SHARES in Schroders, the merchant bank, fell 63p to £23.32 yesterday after it revealed a £32 million provision against potential losses in South-East Asia.

The provision held back pre-tax profits, which tumbled to £245 million from £299 million in the previous year.

Despite adverse publicity about the performance of its pension funds, Schroders' asset management division had another good year. Funds under its control rose to £106.9 billion. Asset management contributed £154 million — or 63 per cent — of pre-tax profit compared with £132 million in 1996. But profits from the investment banking arm declined 15 per cent to £90.8 million because of the Asian provision.

Almost half of the £32 million provision relates to Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand, the three countries that have sought help from the International Monetary Fund. Some £8 million covers the cost of restructuring its Asian oper-

Restructuring costs for Swiss banks hit £2.9bn

By Richard Miles, Banking Correspondent

THE cost of the restructuring of Union Bank of Switzerland and Swiss Bank Corporation in the wake of their £15 billion merger was yesterday put at £2.9 billion.

As expected, the expense of their marriage pushed both banks into the red, and Peter Wuffli, chief financial officer of SBC, warned of further pain. He said the combined group's 1998 profits could be reduced by 10 per cent because of factors linked to the merger.

"We have to expect elimination of some sources of income on the investment banking side, although I have to say we have not seen any evidence of this kind, so we may well be positively surprised," Mr Wuffli said.

Both banks reiterated their forecast of a consolidated profit of between SF10 billion (£4 billion) and SF11 billion by 2002, and SBC released pro-forma data showing that the new, combined UBS would have posted a 1997 group net profit before charges of SF5.04 billion.

UBS also disclosed that losses on derivatives and Japanese bonds had wiped out 80 per cent of equity trading profits in 1997. But the bank shrugged off this setback to achieve an operating profit of SF3.9 billion compared with a small loss in 1996. After charges, it posted a deficit of SF129 million.

"Despite very good results in nearly all sub-segments, trading business was down 4 per cent to SF2.1 billion, the result of already declared losses in equity derivative



transactions and in proprietary trading with Japanese convertible bonds," it said.



Schweizerische Bankgesellschaft

Exceptional charges set BAT back by £800m

By Marianne Curphey, Insurance Correspondent

BAT INDUSTRIES has been hit by almost £800 million of one-off costs, including extra provision for pensions mis-selling, currency movements and the additional expense of demerging its tobacco and financial services divisions.

Exceptional charges sent the company's 1997 pre-tax profits falling 28 per cent to £1.79 billion from £2.49 billion in 1996. Earnings per share fell 34 per cent to 32p but the company is maintaining the final dividend at 10p.

Profits from financial services were £1 billion, up 3 per cent, and profits from tobacco were 24 per cent lower at £1.3 billion. Both were hit by currency movements. BAT is merging its financial services arm, including Eagle Star and Allied Dunbar, with Zurich Group. In preparation for the restructuring the group has set aside £266 million, up from £240 million indicated last October when BAT announced the demerger.

There was a further £85 million charge against pensions mis-sold by Allied Dunbar, the life company. It has so far finished reviewing 62 per

cent of its priority pensions mis-selling cases and Martin Broughton, chief executive of BAT, said he was confident it would meet its September deadline to complete the remainder. He said financial services had shed 1,000 staff during the year.

BAT has set aside £30 million for the planned move of the tobacco division headquarters to Temple in Central London later this year. Currency costs wiped £154 million from operating profits.

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Rentokil Initial ready to take to acquisition trail

By PAUL DURMAN

RENTOKIL INITIAL, the cleaning and pest control company that has become the world's largest business services group, yesterday signalled that it is ready to start considering substantial acquisitions again after completing the integration of BET.

When Rentokil acquired BET for £2.2 billion in 1996, Sir Clive Thompson, chief executive, said the group would not look to make another big acquisition for two

years. Yesterday he said: "We are very pleased with the progress we have made. We have the capacity to lift our eyes and consider other opportunities."

Responding to recent suggestions of possible bid targets, he said: "There is some sense in Rentokil looking at ISS, looking at Compass and looking at Securicor. We will continue to look at those companies and at others."

Rentokil Initial has once

again narrowly beaten its 20 per cent target for growth in earnings per share, despite the £29.6 million of profits lost because of the strength of sterling.

Reported pre-tax profits for 1997 rose by 31 per cent to £417 million on sales that were 23 per cent higher at £2.89 billion. Earnings increased 20.4 per cent to 10.5p. Rentokil Initial is the best-performing FTSE 100 stock over the last ten years, its share price having multiplied 14 times.

The UK business, still the largest with £1.3 billion of sales, increased profits by an "outstanding" 45 per cent to £220.1 million.

At constant currencies, continental European profits of £92.1 million represented a 38 per cent rise, and the North American contribution of £77.5 million was a 62 per cent rise. Comparisons were flattered because the BET businesses were only included for eight months in 1996.

A final dividend of 2.17p will increase the total by 20.9 per cent to 3.06p.

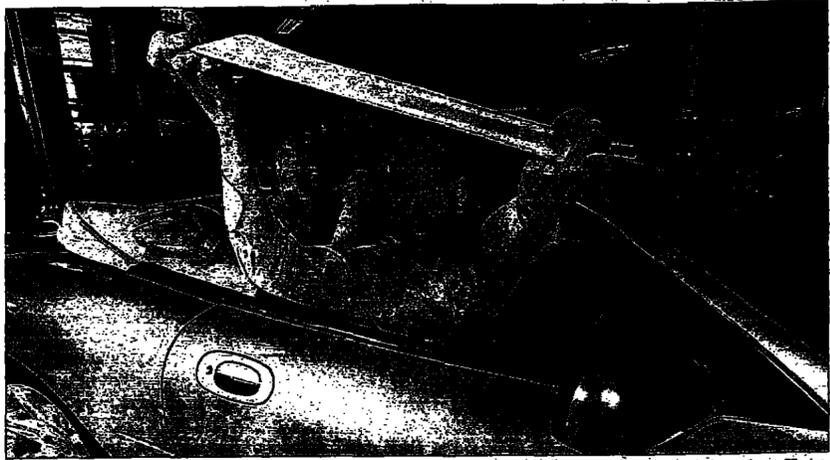
Hilton 'unlikely' to merge with Ladbroke

LADBROKE shares, which rose 5p to a five-year high of 325p yesterday, could come under pressure today (Oliver August writes).

The price is likely to respond to an announcement from Hilton Hotels Corporation that it is unlikely to seek a merger with Ladbroke, owner of the Hilton name outside the US,

because of the obstacles in a cross-border transaction. Speaking in Las Vegas, Steven Bollenbach, Hilton chief executive, said: "Ladbroke is a great company but it's too big for us to buy with cash. And the foreign investors won't hold the US stocks. They'll sell very quickly." He characterised a Ladbroke deal as "unlikely".

Tempus, page 30



Godfrey Codrington, managing director of Ribbons, left, and Neil Scragg, investment manager at Gresham Trust, yesterday announced a £6.5 million management buyout of Ribbons, which makes seat-belt webbing, from Mayflower.

Consultants earn record £2bn

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

CENTRAL government spending on management consultants almost doubled last year as Labour rushed to push through policies — helping the profession to record overall earnings of £2 billion.

Whitehall spent £152 million on consultants, compared with £82 million in 1996, with the vast majority of expenditure taking place after the election in May.

Brian O'Rourke, executive director of the Management Consultancies Association, said the big jump reflected the Government's drive to implement policies

and the unfreezing of a number of vital projects that had been put on hold in the final months of the last Government.

There was a surprising fall, however, in National Health Service expenditure on consultancy, slumping 70 per cent to £5 million. Mr O'Rourke said the decline suggested the Government was only "tinkering at the edges" with NHS reform. Overall public sector spending on consultancy represented 17 per cent of the profession's total fee income, well below the peak figure of 30 per cent in the 1980s.

Management consultancies total earnings increased 25 per cent to £2.1 billion.

in the private sector, fee income rose 135 per cent to £175 million in the water and energy sector. The MCA said that companies in the sector were coming under increasing pressure from the Government and regulators to improve efficiency. The financial and business services sector remains the largest single user of consultants, although income only rose 3 per cent to £484 million.

Overseas earnings rose 19 per cent to £281 million, or about 18 per cent of total earnings, in spite of the strong pound.

Commentary, page 29

US writ for Morgan Stanley

By JON ASHWORTH

SENIOR executives of Morgan Stanley could be forced to appear in court in New York to answer charges of negligence arising from the collapse of an offshore investment fund.

Morgan Stanley in Luxembourg acted as administrator and custodian for The Global Opportunity Fund, which was managed independently by InterCapital Asset Management. Morgan Stanley in London encouraged investors to "gear up" their holdings, lending them the money to do so.

The investors, who include Virginia Taittinger of the champagne dynasty, have filed a suit in New York, alleging fraud, negligence and breach of faith, and claiming \$8.5 million in damages.

Morgan Stanley is separately being sued in Luxembourg for \$44 million in damages and costs arising from its alleged negligence in providing net asset valuations. A clause relating to a sub-fund, The Growth Fund, allows for a further suit in New York.

Morgan Stanley said: "After a cursory review, it appears to contain the same allegations as the Luxembourg suit, which have been thoroughly investigated, and which we continue to regard as being without merit. We are vigorously defending the proceedings."

B.A.T. INDUSTRIES

Restructuring proposals on schedule

	Preliminary results for the year to 31 December	
	1997	1996
PRE-TAX PROFIT	£1,794m	£2,495m
EARNINGS PER SHARE	32.0p	48.6p
BASE DIVIDENDS PER SHARE	26.0p	26.0p

- The decline in pre-tax profit and earnings per share is primarily due to a number of one-off charges, while the strength of sterling further reduced operating profit by some £154 million.
- Financial services trading profit of £1,049 million was 7 per cent ahead in local currency. Profit from the general business was £673 million and from the life and investment business was £376 million.
- Tobacco profit was lower at £1,237 million, after provisions of £258 million for US legal settlements. Excluding these and other exceptional items, profit increased slightly in local currency.
- B.A.T Industries restructuring proposals are on schedule, with listing particulars due to be posted in May and an E.G.M. to be held in June. There is a charge of £266 million in the 1997 accounts, principally reflecting the cost of debt refinancing.
- "We are confident that the merger with Zurich represents by far the best opportunity to develop our interests in financial services and that a free-standing tobacco business will be even better placed to take advantage of the openings for profitable growth."

Lord Cairns, Chairman

Full financial statements for the year ended 31/12/97 will be delivered to the Registrar of Companies and carry an unqualified audit report. The 1997 Annual Report is being posted to shareholders at the end of March. Copies of the preliminary announcement may be obtained from the Company Secretary, B.A.T Industries p.l.c., Windsor House, 50 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0NL.

Kohl's rival visits UK in race for Rolls

THE sale of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars acquired yet more glamour yesterday when it was revealed that Gerhard Schroeder, the cigar-chomping rival to Chancellor Kohl for the German leadership, has visited the UK to lobby on behalf of Volkswagen. Herr Schroeder, the premier of Lower Saxony, is a member of Volkswagen's supervisory board. He visited the UK last weekend with Ferdinand Piech, the Volkswagen chief executive, to meet bosses at Vickers, which has put Rolls-Royce up for auction.

Volkswagen refused to comment yesterday on a report in *Bild-Zeitung*, the German newspaper, which suggested that the company was close to winning the race for the luxury British carmaker. However, industry sources said that there have been no bids on the table yet. A spokeswoman from Vickers said: "The sales process is ongoing and operating to plan." If Volkswagen turns out to be a credible bidder, it will be a huge boost for Vickers. Many in the industry have assumed that Rolls-Royce will go to BMW because of the German group's engine-supply agreement.

United on LineOne

UNITED NEWS AND MEDIA, publisher of *The Express*, has joined LineOne, the Internet-based information service, as an equal partner with BT and News International, owner of *The Times*. The number of subscribers has doubled to more than 70,000 over the past six months. Separately, Tony Tillin, chief executive of Miller Freeman, United's exhibition and trade magazine division, is appointed an executive director, while Fields Wickert-Muirin is appointed a non-executive director.

Cerebrus raises £10.5m

CEREBRUS, a private biopharmaceutical company chaired by George Poste, the head of research and development at SmithKline Beecham, has raised another £10.5 million in a share placing that brought in three new institutional investors. The Wokingham company specialises in diseases of the central nervous system, including Parkinson's disease. Its chief executive is Andrew Smith, who was previously managing director of SB's pharmaceutical business in the UK and Ireland.

London growth for Flo

GRUPE FLO, the French restaurant group, plans to add up to ten outlets in London over the next three years. Flo, which yesterday announced its intention to float on the Paris Bourse's secondary market, has nine London restaurants after its acquisition of the unrelated Café Flo chain and hopes to reach 30. Its London expansion will involve further Café Flo outlets rather than larger brasseries. The UK accounts for around £60 million (£5.9 million) of the group's Fr1.35 billion sales.

Rugby's Mayfair deal

RUGBY ESTATES yesterday exchanged contracts to buy a portfolio of long leasehold properties in Mayfair and Belgravia from the Duke of Westminster's Grosvenor Estate Holdings for £60.15 million. The portfolio of office space in 32 buildings was put on the market last November. The Mayfair properties are centred on Mount Street and Grosvenor Street. The main Belgravia properties are in Grosvenor Crescent and Eaton Gate. The portfolio generates an annual revenue of just under £3.9 million.

Chrysalis

PETER LASSMAN and Mick Fitzwilliam, directors of Chrysalis, sold shares in the company worth £14,000 and £347,000 respectively (*Business News*, March 6). Chris Wright, chairman of Chrysalis, is also chairman of Loftus Road, the company whose subsidiaries include Queens Park Rangers FC.

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.57	2.59	Meta	0.990
Austria S	22.26	21.57	Netherlands Gld	3.252
Belgium F	65.44	60.42	New Zealand \$	2.70
Canada C	2.442	2.294	Norway Kr	12.15
Cyprus C	0.852	0.823	Portugal Esc	201.10
Denmark Kr	12.10	11.21	S Africa Rd	7.85
Finland Mk	1.12	1.07	Spain Ptas	166.37
France F	10.29	9.81	Sweden Kr	12.49
Germany DM	3.18	2.94	Switzerland Fr	2.01
Greece Dr	208	195	Turkey Lira	1.754
Hong Kong S	13.58	12.58	USA \$	1.000
Iceland Ft	1.27	1.12		
India Ru	1.78	1.73		
Israel Sh	6.50	5.82		
Italy Lit	37.46	29.28		
Japan Yen	221.00	206.87		

Notes: For small denomination bank notes supplied by Barclays Bank, 200p notes apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading on Friday.

Some strategy for consultants



COMMENTARY by our City Editor

A consultant, so it is said, is someone who can save his client almost enough to pay his fee. If that were to be the case, then the public purse would be taking a nasty hit, for this Government has become an enthusiastic employer of consultants.

It seems that Whitehall is once more awash with the breed. The Management Consultancies Association still hankers after the heyday of the Thatcher Government, when its members collected almost a third of their income from an administration intent on shaking up or privatising anything it could find. The money dropped off drastically under John Major's less radical regime but last year, Government expenditure on consultants was up by more than a third. No doubt the recipients of that spending will be drafting reports to explain just why the amount needs to be substantially increased. According to the wonderfully self-satisfied prose of the Management Consultancies Association: "Management consultants have a major role not only in assisting government to implement its policies but also in transferring knowledge and skills from a competitive private sector to a civil service seeking to meet the challenges of a new era government."

Let us gloss over the fact that one of the world's major management consultancy firms, Arthur Andersen, is currently in the

midst of an extraordinarily messy attempt to disassociate itself from the accountancy business of a similar name. We should not dwell on the squabbles that led the top man at PwC Consulting to resign and then return. Physicians rarely dose themselves with the appropriate medicines.

Consultants can make a useful contribution in government, as in business, but only if those who employ them do so with care. Given the number of task forces and consultative committees roving around Whitehall at the moment, hundreds of bright young graduates with the obligatory button-down collars and terrifying hourly charge-out rate, might go largely unnoticed by bemused civil servants.

Outsiders do offer a fresh view and the top firms of consultants do contain some of the best strategic thinkers to leave academia. Given a specific brief and a deadline, they can often deliver what insiders cannot. But they need to be carefully managed by those who employ them.

Companies which use consultants on a project basis should be able to say that the fee has been more than covered by the results. When Sir Owen Green was

running BTR, he took pride in insisting that he would never allow a consultant over the threshold. Companies today generally acknowledge that they cannot contain all the expertise that may be necessary and there is no stigma to outsourcing. But there are companies where the consultancies have prospered and the shareholders have footed the bill. Government must beware of falling into the same trap.

Merit is all in the merchandise

Sears, in the five years that Lizan Strong was chief executive, was a veritable goldmine for consultants. If he was unhappy with the opinion offered by one firm, Strong would seek out another view. The resulting strategy was one that was constantly evolving and therefore totally confused. The

shareholders are still bearing the costs of this lack of direction.

Yesterday brought news of another disastrous fallout from the Sears stable. Selling Fosters was one of the more understandable moves the company made: it was a brand that clearly lacked cachet, and why the debonair, bow-tie-sporting David Carter-Johnson thought it had a future was bemusing, even if Sears was prepared to pay him to take it away.

Just how he has kept the business ticking over until now is something of a mystery to students of the high street. That he should have been contemplating a flotation as recently as last year appears to demonstrate a degree of optimism that evidently he failed to convey to City advisers, none of whom appears to have been interested in helping bring Fosters to the stock market.

In a fit of unusual perspicacity, it seems that Sears extricated itself from the uncomfortable

position of being landlord to Fosters, selling on most of the properties last year. It thus escapes a repeat of the ignominious outcome of the mis-labelled "sale" of hundreds of its shoe shops to the now defunct Fascia, in which the responsibility for the leases reverted to Sears.

Fosters' problem was that it had a portfolio of prime sites, with rents to match, but it could not generate the sales to make them pay. The business was simply not in touch with the ever-more demanding market place.

As the latest figures from the British Retail Consortium underlined this week, the high street is not overrun with customers anxious to off-load their cash. Business has to be won with the right merchandise at the right price. Rosters's Carter-Johnson is prepared to admit the unforgivable sin of getting the merchandise wrong. The City is bracing itself for a batch of different excuses from some of the other retailers

who are finding the going tough. Keith Edelman, at Storehouse, may be looking for some creative thoughts from his scriptwriters. Some Sears brands are said to be finding shoppers somewhat lacking in enthusiasm. But those who have seen John Hoerner recently say that his smile indicates that he is already confident that Arcadia will live up to its name.

Eddie the dove scatters the hawks

For mortgage payers, all that matters is that interest rates have not gone up. For the City, however, there is utter fascination in Eddie George sticking his neck out to thwart the "inflation nutters".

For years, the Governor always seemed impatient to raise rates and horribly stubborn about cutting them. The Square Mile dubbed him Steady Eddie in recognition of his steadfast refusal to allow Chancellors to boost the economy, and with it their popularity, without a fight. So why on earth has Mr George so decisively become a dove?

It may be that Mr George genuinely believes that the fallout from Asia could both exacer-

bate the impending economic slowdown and lower prices at the same time. He, unlike Mervyn King, who, it is now revealed, parted company with his boss to side with the hawks, has given great weight to Asia in recent comment.

It may be that the Governor is emulating the venerated Alan Greenspan in America who has refused to raise interest rates until he sees firm evidence of inflationary pressures building. If Mr George is content to allow the economy room to breathe until it looks like hyper-ventilating, it would be a welcome relief from the inflation paranoia that appears to reign at the Treasury.

There may even be a little part of Steady Eddie that wants to annoy his nemesis, Gordon Brown, who has dropped plenty of hints that he would have liked the MPC to raise rates higher and sooner.

Ta-ta to TI

THE once proud name of Tube Investments has long been reduced to TI Group. Computer folk will instantly know this is Texas Instruments. Those who worry about credit ratings may think it is Trade Indemnity. The TI name should go. Any company brave enough to eschew a share buyback in the belief that it can make better use of shareholders' money than merely to return it deserves to be graced with a distinguished name.

TI prepared to spend £600m on acquisitions

SIR Christopher Lewinton, chairman of TI Group, said yesterday the engineering group is prepared to spend up to £600 million on acquisitions (See Commentary, this page).

Bucking the current trend for share buybacks, Sir Christopher ruled out a return of capital to shareholders. He said: "We have a whole stack of new investment ideas."

TI is likely to turn its attention to both on acquisitions for its John Crane and Bundy divisions. John Crane makes seals and is the group's largest division by profits, despite tough markets putting pressure on margins recently.

Bundy makes fluid-carrying systems for cars and refrigerators — one of its current contracts is to supply fuel and

brake systems to the new Rolls-Royce Silver Seraph. Dowty, TI's aerospace arm, is the other candidate for expansion through acquisitions.

Sir Christopher was announcing a 5 per cent rise in 1997 pre-tax profits to £222.5 million, excluding exceptional items. Sales rose 6 per cent to £1.87 billion.

David Larkam, an analyst at Albert & Sharp, said he had trimmed his 1998 profits forecast by about £5 million to £240 million, mainly because of sterling's ongoing strength.

The operating profit margin at John Crane fell from 16.4 to 15.1 per cent. TI said the market for marine and mechanical seals had fallen by about 5 per cent.

Organic sales growth was up 11 per cent at Bundy. Overall, adverse currency translation from the strength of sterling hit sales by £26 million and profits by £15.2 million, but TI said the economic downturn in Asia and Latin America had no material effect.

Dowty, which makes turbine components and hydraulics, nearly doubled operating profits to £42 million as aircraft-makers enjoyed record orders. TI said it expected the traditionally cyclical aerospace industry to face a leveling-off of orders after 1999, with the Asian economic crisis having an impact eventually.

TI was forced to sell its share of the Messier-Dowty landing gear joint venture last year to Snecma of France, its partner,

Heywood Williams may expand

HEYWOOD WILLIAMS, the building products and automotive components group, may spend up to £100 million on acquisitions or return more cash to investors. The news lifted the shares 10p to 233p.

After shaking up its UK businesses, the strongly cash-generative Heywood said it may make acquisitions here or in the US. Alternatively, it may buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares. Last August, the group bought 10 per cent of its shares at a cost of about £20 million.

Operating profits rose from £40.3 million to £41.2 million in 1997. The pre-tax figure of £43.7 million included an exceptional £3.5 million disposal gain.

Turnover dipped from £336.5 million to £332.8 million.

Coats recovery hindered by strength of sterling

THE recovery of Coats Viyella, the struggling textiles group, is being held back by the strong pound and the weak Brazilian economy. However, Michael Ost, chief executive, said the demerger of the group, announced in December, was on course and insisted there were no plans for a trade sale of the core Viyella divisions.

Coats Viyella's dividend has been slashed to 4.7p (8.3p) after a fall in pre-tax profits, excluding restructuring costs, from £83 million to £53 million last year with profits from continuing businesses down 14 per cent on a like-for-like basis to £144 million.

The strength of the pound reduced operating profit by £20 million while a £20 million restructuring charge was mainly attributable to the thread business in Brazil and a cut in UK



Alliance: operations shift

business which exclusively supplies Marks & Spencer and made a loss of £1 million last year.

The weak performance was blamed on management turmoil as the company attempted to shift operations out of the UK to low-cost countries in an effort to remain competitive. Viyella's Jaeger fashion business is expected to have a weak first half due to an unsuccessful attempt to attract a younger clientele.

However, profits from home furnishings improved and the company is expecting better margins in contract clothing this year.

Coats Viyella's precision engineering business, suffered from exchange rate losses and the weak Brazilian motor sector with operating profits down from £37.6 million to £35.4 million.

Church & Co strides out

CHURCH & Co, the Northampton footwear manufacturer, yesterday announced an 8 per cent rise in pre-tax profit to £5.8 million for 1997 despite the strength of sterling. Church predicted further profits growth in the current year and also raised the possibility of a buyback of up to 10 per cent of its shares.

However, John Church, chairman, said nothing had been decided at this stage.

Mr Church bought 5,000 shares at 405p through a trust yesterday, taking his total holding in the company to just over 8 per cent, while James Espey, a director, bought 2,000 shares at 410p.

The chairman was upbeat about prospects for 1998 after an "encouraging start to the year" with earnings ahead of the same period last year.

News of the possible buyback, the positive outlook and directors' share purchases drove the company's shares up 23.5p to 422.5p. In 1997 turnover was £80.8 million, up from £79.7 million in 1996, while earnings per share rose 13 per cent to 35.7p. A final dividend of 13.5p, up from 12.5p, makes a total of 17p, up from 15.7p.



John Church is upbeat about prospects for this year

Hanson gets \$605m for division

HANSON, the former conglomerate, took a big step towards becoming a building materials group by finalising the sale of Grove Worldwide to Keystone of America for \$605 million (£367 million).

Hanson said the sale price was £160 million higher than book value. However, a £50 million exceptional loss will be incurred from the disposal after writing back goodwill previously written off amounting to £210 million.

The sale is dependent upon Keystone putting in place the necessary financing and will require regulatory approval but is expected to be completed within three months. Keystone is the main investment arm of financier Robert Bass.

The news lifted Hanson shares 10p higher to 348p yesterday. The company's Hanson Properties, Spectrum, its US building and civil engineering business, and Hanson Air are yet to be sold.

The sale of Grove will wipe out the debt of the company which stood at £217 million at the end of last year.

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Legal & General

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Former bin man in \$20bn rubbish deal

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

THE \$20 billion (£12 billion) merger of Waste Management and USA Waste will create a new rubbish disposal group in America led by a former rubbish collection man.

Waste Management International, which is based in London, will be a beneficiary of the deal which is believed to have been initiated by George Soros, the billionaire investor.

The companies expect to save \$800 million a year and rebuild Waste Management in the wake of strategy and accounting mistakes. One analyst called the merger a "distress sale in disguise."

John Drury, the USA Waste chief executive, said: "We anticipate the cost savings coupled with expected strong revenue growth to allow the combined company's operating earnings to grow at a rate in excess of 20 per cent for the next several years."

As the son of a refuse collection man, Mr Drury is certain he can find savings.

Mr Drury and Mr Soros declined to comment on how the deal was put together, but analysts suggested the Soros Fund, a big Waste Management shareholder, persuaded the companies to close the deal. Late last year, the fund called for "swift and dramatic measures to be undertaken at Waste Management."

The combined group will control about 20 per cent of the US market. The deal is worth \$13.5 billion in stock plus \$7 billion of Waste Management debt assumed by USA Waste.

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Come back Gladstone, all is forgiven

Could Gordon Brown be the new W. E. Gladstone? The Chancellor shares his fellow Scot's stern addition to fiscal rectitude. He even implied, via his surprising pre-Budget inflation forecast, that the Bank of England was not tough enough. And Mr Brown is anxious to go on from the Treasury to long spells as Prime Minister, like the great Victorian.

This year's Finance Bill is also expected to be horrendously long. Fortunately, this need not mean a Budget speech to rival Gladstone's 1853 record of 4 hours and 45 minutes. Having handed money management to the Bank of England and washed his hands of it, Mr Brown cut out from his July Budget speech the traditional long boring section on how sound economic prospects now were.

One trait the two certainly share is the one that made Queen Victoria loathe W. E. so much: self-righteousness. This was evident in July and is guaranteed to feature strongly again on Tuesday.

First off, Mr Brown wanted to cut the structural Budget deficit

and to fund his Welfare to Work programme. He needed higher taxes now to secure — it is hoped — lower public spending later. You might think a Chancellor would explain this, writing his hands gently and regret that someone has to pay and that all who could afford to most chip in.

This is not Mr Brown's way. New Labour is, you understand, not a high-tax party. So when taxes are raised, it is not a raid on the public but a just punishment for those whose activities are so nefarious, whose prosperity is so antisocial that they deserve to be taxed. Taking money off them is indeed a righteous act. Labour had mounted a long campaign to vilify ten million investors in utilities, softening them up for a £5.2 billion fine. It was not even to be counted as normal taxation.

Mr Brown railed, with the heights of rhetoric that only Truman

can command, against the evils of short-termism and the virtues of long-termism, whatever these may be. This prepared the way for his £5 billion-a-year grab on pension fund income, the key to balancing state finances. Far from taxing and eventually slashing private pensions, Mr Brown says his huge new tax was a helping hand for long-term business investment.

The main purpose of Tuesday's Budget tax measures will be to transfer funds from families on middle incomes with savings to those with the most modest earnings and no savings. This is vital if we are to attack poverty and thereby genuinely save on means-tested welfare spending. Levying income and employment taxes on families below the poverty threshold is a long-running scandal, though not one that Gladstone would have allowed or that Mr Brown will end. Unfortunately,



new Labour promised not to raise income tax rates. So those to be short must be public enemies. From the propaganda of recent months you can make out some of Tuesday's victims.

The quarter of people who smoke tobacco are inevitably in the frame, though here Mr Brown is following a long tradition. They will be joined by motorists, espe-

cially those who ever park their car away from their attached garage. Savers will suffer, though the individual savings account was so badly designed that public outcry may soften the blow.

Some of the reviews set up last year may produce "radical reform" this time. Pillorying of those who make undeserved capital gains suggests that the annual gains tax allowance, though irrelevant to that issue, may be under fire. Company tax is again to be reformed, to boost revenue in time. City high-earners may be cited to raise the national insurance ceiling for those on incomes modestly above the average.

Such targets along with his made in July, are strikingly similar to those featured in the Callaghan Budget of 1965, the first after Labour won power to end 13 years of Tory rule. This was famous for being one of the longest of modern

times, a few minutes over two hours, for being well-meaning, radical and a failure.

Short-term management of the economy rather got lost among the long-term reforms, many of which did not turn out well either. Mr Brown could fall into the same trap, even if he achieves truly Gladstonian success in balancing the public finances.

Gladstone had the gold standard. Mr Brown hankers after EMU. The first stage was to hand monetary policy to the Bank. If we adopted the euro, economic management via the Budget would also disappear, leaving Chancellors to balance the books and use tax to improve the workings of the local economy, as Mr Brown intends. But we are not in the euro. So eschewing fiscal policy would make Mr Brown a purer monetarist than any of his Tory peers.

This is crucial at a moment

when monetary policy is stuck. In a two-tier economy, booming service sectors threaten to push inflation above target. But manufacturers are stagnant because high interest rates have blown sterling sky high. The Bank held off another rate rise in March because of the unmeasurable impact of the Asian recession and collapsing tiger currencies.

Any impact will, however, focus on traded goods, via the exchange rate. In any case, 7.25 per cent base rates are already near crisis levels for a low-inflation economy. The German discount rate has only topped 7.5 per cent once in 30 years, to cope with reunification.

This dilemma calls for a helping hand from fiscal policy. It is no good simply to reply that the Chancellor is squeezing the economy by balancing the books. Taking £5 billion a year out of pension funds is, for instance, nothing like taxing credit card transactions by the same amount. Mr Brown, it is said, genuinely does not believe in fiscal policy. If so, the worst part of his Budget may be its omissions.

Mr Gates goes to Washington to fight the regulatory mood-change



AMERICAN AGENDA
BRONWEN BRONDOX

In an extraordinary week for information technology companies, with shares gyrating on the world's stock markets, the most eccentric commentary was surely Bill Gates's cyber-diary, chronicling his trip last week to the nation's capital. It was also one of the most valuable.

In *Slate*, his Internet magazine, Microsoft's chairman jotted down a tourist's notes of his trip to Washington to persuade Congress not to shackle his empire with antitrust laws. Teeming with phrases such as "the Next Big Thing", the diary reads like a modern Mozart's musings, alternating precociousness with pessimism.

Yet Mr Gates also delivered last week the two messages that the stock market, as much as Capitol Hill, should take to heart. The greatest threat to the profits of the information technology sector is failure to anticipate consumers' demands as well as the competition. The second threat — unfortunately for all sectors of the economy — is the muddled thinking behind the new aggression of antitrust regulators.

It would be premature to say, as many tried to do, that last week's earthquake in the information technology sector of the stock market heralded the long-predicted slowdown in US growth. That may well be the case, but the profit warnings from three of the largest US computer manufacturers do not give enough cause to assert it. There is, instead, every sign that the trauma is particular to the sector. Markets were right — if overdue — in marking down shares of information technology manufacturers. They were less obviously wise in taking hopeful refuge in the



Bill Clinton argues that investors should worry about regulatory trends and those towards buying cheaper PCs

shares of "Internet" companies at the same time.

The drama began with Intel's warning late last Wednesday of a 10 per cent fall in first-quarter revenues. Economic warnings were hardly surprising. Slower growth in Asia and a stronger US dollar were clearly going to have an impact at some point. Profits in the sector ever been easy to predict with precision; Intel rattled the market with earnings disappointments in May and October last year. The past month's astonishing share performance also made a correction likely; in the three weeks before Intel's announcement, its shares had risen 31 per cent, while Dell's had leapt 68 per cent.

All the same, there are reasons why this sudden weakening of demand may be more than a blip, and why a spate of price cutting may not be enough to return stock levels to normal. As Mr Gates argues,

companies soared, on the reasoning that a price war in the PC market would encourage people to use the Internet more. Yahoo!, one of the big access providers, is up about a fifth, and others by about a tenth.

From one angle, the profits warnings were hardly surprising. Slower growth in Asia and a stronger US dollar were clearly going to have an impact at some point. Profits in the sector ever been easy to predict with precision; Intel rattled the market with earnings disappointments in May and October last year. The past month's astonishing share performance also made a correction likely; in the three weeks before Intel's announcement, its shares had risen 31 per cent, while Dell's had leapt 68 per cent.

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investors in information technology should worry about the deeper trends in the industry and in regulation. For a start, there are signs of a shift in the type of computers that people want. To Intel's surprise, there has been a surge in demand for PCs costing less than \$1,000 (£600) — "good enough" machines — as Compaq vividly demonstrated last year with its new range of cheap PCs.

The trouble is that these cheap PCs, which now make up a third of US units sold, do not need the state-of-the-art chips on which Intel earns its highest margins. They also squeeze the profit margins of manufacturers and assemblers. While industry analysts still predict that demand for PCs will rise by more than 10 per cent this year, they also forecast that profit margins will be trimmed.

Manufacturers' response to these pressures is to cut stocks further, and to make machines

only a few weeks ahead of delivery, the horizon by which they can be confident of demand. But that reduces predictability even more along the whole chain of manufacturers.

While it is plausible that Internet companies will benefit, as many investors appear to have reckoned, the risk is that cheaper PCs will not win over customers who have so far resisted the lure of the Internet, but appeal simply to those wanting to replace earlier models.

The second trend that should alarm investors is the fashion for heavy-handed antitrust regulation. Mr Gates's trip to Capitol Hill was prompted by a Senate panel attacking the dominance of Microsoft's Windows in the market for PC operating systems. That probe will run in parallel with the Justice Department's antitrust suit, alleging that Microsoft has abused Windows' position in trying to secure its place in the Internet browser market. As Mr Gates told his diary: "It's been

a year since the last time I was in DC. I think I'm going to be making the trip a lot more frequently from now on."

So will others. On Friday, the Justice Department questioned the proposed deal between Compaq and Digital Equipment, as well as a handful of proposed telecom mergers.

Farly, its new activism reflects the unprecedented merger and acquisition wars consuming corporate America. But the Justice Department's approach also reflects a shift in political mood towards corporate giants. In the 1980s, the Reagan philosophy of "getting government off your back" prevailed, drawing on the arguments of free-market economists that regulation was irrelevant or damaging in a global, technology-based economy. Last week's impassioned Senate speeches by Republicans as well as Democrats showed that antitrust politics have changed.

Mr Gates was entirely right to retort that Washington's ageing political warhorses were likely to do more damage than good to consumers in their attempts to second-guess such a fast-moving industry.

Perhaps the best lesson for members of the Senate panel would come from putting their own savings in high-technology shares. The exposure would teach them quickly about the difficulty of predicting the next quarter's profits, and that present dominance of a market is no guarantee of future survival. For those who do not need that learning experience, the past week may be lesson enough. If profound changes are under way in the PC market, the shocks may not be over.

Pixelated solution to copyright theft

ANY business that makes money from selling intellectual property faces two fundamental problems: distribution and protection of copyright. The Internet has been a cheap and efficient method of addressing the first, but has posed a threat to the second.

This dilemma has led to various innovations to protect intellectual property in Cyberspace. The latest arrived this week from a partnership between New Mexico Software, of the US, and Signum Technologies, based in Gloucestershire.

The product is "digital fingerprinting" software which can electronically watermark and trace photographs and other images. Its makers claim it will significantly reduce copyright theft in all mediums, especially the unregulated Internet.

The software is already included in a photo-editing package from Adobe and is being marketed as part of an insurance policy — to be sold by CE Heath and underwritten by Beazley at Lloyd's of London.

Picture libraries have long complained that they lose about 30 per cent of their revenues to copyright thieves. The problem, they say, is twofold: it is often hard to find out who has stolen images, and expensive to take legal action.

New Mexico Software and Signum claim they can tackle both problems. Signum's software processes digital image files, making minute changes to the value of each pixel, in a mathematically derived pattern. The changes cannot be seen by the human eye.

Each image is therefore given a unique fingerprint to identify its creator — which can be detected only by the company's software. The risk, inherent in all crime-beating technology, is that thieves will



eventually work out a way to get around it.

THE autumn launch of digital TV could be marred by more than just commercial difficulties. In the US alarming stories have emerged about unintended side-effects of using new frequencies. When WFFA, the Dallas TV station, switched on a new high-definition transmitter this week, its powerful signal apparently interfered with a medical centre's wireless heart monitors, which used a previously vacant TV frequency. Similar problems could occur in Britain because digital TV, like high-definition TV, uses many more frequencies than an analogue service.

GORDON BROWN could have a high-tech link with Louise Woodward, the British au pair. When the judgment in the Woodward trial was put on the Internet, the power failure that followed was one of the biggest public relations disasters in the Net's short history. When Mr Brown delivers his Budget next week, the Treasury's Web site is expected to attract even more attention. So all eyes will be on UUNET, the WorldCom subsidiary that switches on the site tomorrow, to make sure everything runs smoothly.

CHRIS AYRES

Milk run

I HEAR a new German bank has ambitions to become a big player here alongside Dresdner and Deutsche (Oh, and Westdeutsche Landesbank, if you must). Commerzbank, Germany's third biggest, is trawling through the City for equities types, especially those shaken loose by various recent mergers. Yesterday the bank hired Mark Eben, former director of syndicated loans at BZW and more recently at Credit Suisse First Boston, to head up its capital markets division.

Commerzbank is also thought to be in talks with a number of top scribblers, including John Aiken of UBS, one of the City's best banking analysts.

Mehmet Dalman, head of global equities, now has a London team of about 60 and is looking for another 35. The bank wants to build up a competitive European operation by sinking a "substantial" sum into the venture, he says. They looked at BZW last year but instead decided on a greenfield approach. To adapt the old saying, why buy a cow when you can milk someone else's herd?



Toad, I'm afraid there's some terrible news about Ratty

UNILEVER is backing the first production of a very old play by Tennessee Williams, *Not About Nightingales*, at the Cottesloe Theatre. It is about a brutal prison regime, where food is lousy and failure to eat it results in torture. In the climactic scene, four inmates are parboiled to death. Unilever's guests on Monday night, including many of the City's top bankers and businessmen, marvelled at the acting and reached gratefully for a reviving drink, but were too scared to ask, was the reaction of one audience member in particular. Someone who



knows a bit about prisons. Our old friend with a touch of the night about him, the former Home Secretary, Michael Howard

Black-out
AN EMBARRASSING moment yesterday at Schroders. Asked which deals the bank had advised on during 1997, the top brass dried up completely. "They were all around £1 billion, nothing very eye-catching," said the normally smooth chairman Win Bischoff feebly. While Peter Sedgwick, vice-chairman, was so rattled by the question he knocked his name badge clear off the desk. The directors were rescued by a helper with a photocopy of a magazine ar-

icle containing a list of deals. Memo: try to do better at clients' meetings.

LORD CAIRNS at BAT Industries is beginning to feel picked upon. For the second year in a row our biggest cigarette manufacturer's results have coincided with No Smoking Day. "We do not set out to have our results when it is National No Smoking Day, it's the way it happened. It may be the other way round," he says darkly. Alas, it is cock-up rather than conspiracy time, and the fault is BAT's.

"No Smoking Day has always been in the second week of March, and we've run it for 15 years now," someone at the pressure group tells me. "I'm sure that BAT are aware of that." For reference, Lord Cairns, the actual day set about nine months ahead. Probably a Wednesday, which makes it March 10 next year.

Count down
NEWS that the much-travelled Ian Hay Davison has won this year's Founding Societies' Centenary Award, the lifetime's achievement going handed out by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, prompts an unkind thought. The award was started almost 20 years ago and is for accountants making an outstanding

contribution, perhaps in another field. Run-of-the-mill professionals need not apply.

Past winners, as well as the obvious ones such as Sir David Tweedie and Nigel Rudd, include Sir Bryan Carberg, once at Otel, the Right Reverend Jim Thompson, Bishop of Bath and Wells — no, I didn't know that either — and Lord Wakeham. But how many distinguished accountants-turned-whatever are there? Are they like famous Belgians or Canadians — more of them than you think except that they are not obviously identifiable as such? Or will supplies one day run out?

MARTIN WALLER



Spot the accountant — the Bishop of Bath and Wells

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ACCOUNTANCY

Always an agent for change

As Ian Davison is honoured by the accountancy profession, Robert Bruce assesses his career

Ian Davison has always been an outsider. He is the pioneer who ran Arthur Andersen for 16 years and ensured that the American upstart was transformed into one of the largest firms in the country. He took on the reform of both Lloyd's of London and the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. In all of these enterprises great changes were wrought but the hugely energetic Davison style does not suit the faint of heart. Even his famous *Who's Who* entry under "recreations," "gardening, under supervision," suggests the degree of unease felt when the man takes an idea into his head.

But now the accountancy profession is to give him its greatest honour, the Founding Societies Award, and perhaps now the profession will start to become reconciled to his views. He has, after all, been on the English ICA's council since 1975, and while he has acted as a great influence and conscience he has never progressed to the power of the presidency.

These days he is remarkably relaxed. But his views still set cats among pigeons on virtually every issue under the sun. He sees his profession as stuck in a cultural quagmire. He

sees the institute as incapable of action. The institute is a body to which things happen," he said, "because its membership will not accept any change. As a result the institute is a raft, not a ship." While that may strike gloom into presidents, Davison does not think it a bad thing. "It's bad for people who believe that by leading the institute they can produce change." He smiles.

"But it's a good thing for those who think the institute leaders are not too talented and that it is better that they do not have too much power."

The consequences, as Davison sees them, do not make pleasant reading for the institute. "We will become an institute of auditors," he said, "which is what we quite properly ought to be."

He sees his greatest achievement as that of building the foundations of Arthur Andersen in this country. When he took over as managing partner it was the 44th biggest in the land with 181 staff. When he left it was eighth with 2,000 staff. Today it is the largest firm in the land. "The great thing about partnerships," he said, "is that you can invest for the long term. So you could lose money for 20 years, which we did. I grew the top line. But



Ian Davison is to receive the Founding Societies Award

we never made a profit." It was his successors, Don Hanson and Roy Chapman, who took up the legacy and made it hugely profitable.

As for the current crisis as the global firm seems to be tearing itself apart he takes the long view. "We have had crises before," he said. In fact he precipitated one: When the then global chief, Harvey Kapnick, wanted to float the consultancy business off in 1979 it was Davison who led the opposition. "I got a standing ovation from the partners," he said, and Kapnick was booted out, "but it was my biggest mistake. I had done the right thing but I was nailed as the whistle-blower."

He thinks Andersen gets into these crises for the right reasons. "It's more democratic and more complicated than

other firms," he said. But he offered no views on the current mess except to say: "It's always been ego which has caused the problems."

The task he enjoyed the most was reforming the Hong Kong Stock Exchange in 1987. And he took great satisfaction from its performance during the great disasters in the Far East over the past six months. "It worked beautifully," he said. "It survived the crash last October. It was the only stock exchange which functioned in the crisis."

He is most scathing about Lloyd's of London. He became chief executive in 1983 to sort out the mess and it was another famous battle. "I didn't expect it," he said, "but it looks like Lloyd's will survive the century." It was always doomed in his view. "It is inherently an insider's market. All external names were vulnerable to being led like lambs to the slaughter. Until 1964 there were no outsiders. They were all related, only family members. And then after that people only came in because it was a tax dodge, which is always a suspect motivation." Davison's period as chief executive was frustrating "but ultimately worthwhile." "If I hadn't gone there we wouldn't have taken the lid off and let people see what was going on."

It was the classic Davison situation. "I'm an agent for change," he said. And that has probably been his greatest contribution to business life and the profession.

In the Government's own backyard

NEXT week the focus turns upon the Budget. There will be much comment about the detail, but little comment about the wider setting of the Government's accounts.

This is unfortunate, because the accounting systems within government are still not up to scratch. Ever since Samuel Pepys oversaw the building of naval vessels in the 17th century, governments of the day have striven to the same sort of accounting systems that the average church raffle might employ. The rest of the world has moved on, but government departments operate little more than income and expenditure accounts. The concept of accruals is unknown. At the end of the year there is a scramble to spend, because if you don't, you lose it on the following year's budget.

That is not to say that strenuous efforts at change have not been taking place. A process of resource accounting, which is another description of what the rest of the business world has been doing for decades, is being implemented. But it is a slow process. Civil servants have never liked accountants getting in the way. It was ever thus.

The latest report from Sir John Bourn, head of the National Audit Office, spells it out. It is lamentable. In the report Sir John shows that "well over half of departments expect to produce resource accounts for 1997-98 in advance of the formal dry run year", which still leaves a sizeable number of departments still unable to make the shift. "Most departments have acquired the technology for resource accounting, although two major departments may not have systems fully in place by April 1, 1998, the start of the dry run year." It seems extraordinary that some departments have yet to acquire the technology when the start of this great step forward into the accounting unknown is only months away. And finally a number of departments have yet to finalise their accounting policies, and up to a quarter may not be able to identify and value assets and liabilities by April 1, 1998.

when it is its own backyard, funded by taxpayers' money, that is being run as what can only be described as a shambles, if somehow does not matter.

The same seems to be true in the growing arguments over the accounting treatment of the Government's Private Finance Initiative (PFI). The efforts to remove new hospitals, roads and prisons from the public sector borrowing requirement comes close to what, in the bad old corporate days of creative accounting, was known as off balance sheet financing. The Accounting Standards Board (ASB) after last autumn's Treasury publication of *Partnerships For Prosperity* issued draft guidelines. These followed the standard of the private sector in such matters. Now all the responses are in. And, by and large, people have stuck to the party line. If you are likely to make some money out of the PFI, like members of the CBI for example, you have argued against the ASB's proposed rules. But even the CBI has to admit that "the impact of the ASB's guidance could be profound", and that the important point is that of "adhering strictly to the core principle of 'substance over form'".

There are big problems ahead here. The Treasury believes that the PFI is a godsend. It removes large capital projects from its borrowing figures. Yet, in the 1980s, when every creative finance director was adopting the same wheeze, politicians were furious. It was the scandal of off balance sheet financing that led to the setting up of the ASB as a robust rulemaker.

KPMG, in its response to the ASB paper, make the issue clear. Effectively, the firm says that if the ASB caves in to the Treasury, then the private sector will follow the Government's example and start resurrecting all manner of off balance sheet schemes again. "The ASB's proposals are necessarily robust. Anything less would undermine the board's achievements in improving the quality of financial reporting within the private sector, in an area that has in the past, been subject to abuse." It comes down to the possibility that the Government will say "things are different in the public sector". That would be disastrous for the concept of effective financial reporting. It would also be disastrous for the resource accounting programme that is attempting to bring the Government's dinosaur of an accounting system up to date.



ROBERT BRUCE

however. An accountancy lecturer was marking essays and assessing how much her students understood about regulation of the profession, which is a problem with which the great and the good wrestle. In particular, they worry about how governance is to be achieved. No worry, according to the student. "The regulation of the accountancy profession is governed by statutes." And we thought they were dummies.

ROBERT BRUCE

Sixth-formers' fantasy Budget

DOWN at Bournemouth University, they run the only degree course in taxation in the country and with the Budget due next week they thought they ought to poll sixth-formers for ideas as to what Gordon Brown ought to do to please first-time voters. A Fantasy Budget competition was organised with the Chartered Institute of Taxation and NatWest. We can report that the results are unlikely to burst

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

forth from the Chancellor's dispatch case on Tuesday. A tax on "bad hair" was suggested as was the legalisation, and then the taxation, of cannabis. Respondents also suggested a national car-sharing scheme, a VAT-free passport for the homeless and finally an NHS "no claims bonus" to be paid if you stay fit and well. Ah, yes, the idealism of youth. They will learn eventually.

It's a stick-up
IT IS always good to see rivalry spilling over on to poster sites. BDO Stoy Hayward plastered 280 sites across the nation with a poster saying "Go Forth And Multiply" last week. And this week, with its name and a slogan of "Business Grow-How" on them, the posters reappeared with "Come Here and Multiply" across the top. Needless to say, it

stuck one up outside the head office of Grant Thornton, its closest rival. It won't work. Grant Thornton's marketing partner, it transpires, is canvassing in Scotland this week.

Rules set in stone
WONDERFUL how the truth about great issues of the day often appears in the unlikelyst places, in this case a student's

THIS WEEKEND IN THE SUNDAY TIMES MAGAZINE

THE SUNDAY TIMES

SYLVIA'S GHOST
Revealed: the letter from Ted Hughes that sheds new light on the suicide of Sylvia Plath and the couple's haunted life in Devon

LAST RITES
Just before his death, Dermot Morgan, the star of Father Ted, gave The Sunday Times what turned out to be his last interview

DENISE DENISE
She's the sex symbol who has to be tucked up in bed by 8.30pm. We dish up an interview with The Big Breakfast's Denise Van Outen

THE SUNDAY TIMES IS THE SUNDAY PAPERS

BoJ chief faces resign calls as official is arrested

By GEORGE SIVELL

TOKYO prosecutors raided Japan's central bank yesterday and arrested a top official as part of an investigation into allegations that he passed on market-sensitive information in return for lavish entertainment.

The arrest of Yasuyuki Yoshizawa, 42, head of the Bank of Japan (BoJ) capital markets division, provoked calls for the resignation of Yasuo Matsuhashita, 72, the bank's Governor. Tokyo traders said the arrest could easily

hampers the central bank's efforts to conduct money market operations and could also trigger selling of yen-denominated assets.

Asked if he intended to resign, Mr Matsuhashita said: "I have a grave responsibility as the bank Governor. However, first I would like to take responsibility by making utmost efforts to clarify the facts and recover trust in the central bank."

A prosecutors' statement said allegations against Mr.

Yoshizawa were that he was repeatedly wined, dined and treated to games of golf by the Industrial Bank of Japan (IBJ) and Sanwa Bank.

Prosecutors say that, in return, Mr Yoshizawa gave the two banks advance information on the Bank of Japan's daily money market operations which determine short-term interest rates.

He is also said to have passed on inside information about other commercial banks, as well as giving the IBJ special treatment on bidding for repurchase operations. Mr Yoshizawa is also accused of arranging special treatment for Sanwa in setting up collateral when borrowing from the central bank.

Just hours before his arrest, Mr Yoshizawa told a news agency the entertainment he received was within the bounds of "social courtesy" and did not involve special favours. He added: "I never received excess entertainment."

The dollar rose against the yen on news of the arrest and traders forecast a further surge if Mr Matsuhashita was forced to step down. Kazuo Muraoka, the chief Cabinet secretary, said Mr Matsuhashita bore responsibility for the scandal because he was the Bank of Japan's top official. He added: "Matsuhashita obviously bears responsibility as the supervisor but I will not comment on whether he should resign or not before the investigation has revealed the case in its entirety."

Mr Matsuhashita is a former administrative vice-finance minister, the Finance Ministry's top bureaucrat, and joined the private sector in 1986. In 1990, he presided over the merger of Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank and Sanwa Bank which produced Sakura Bank. Mr Matsuhashita was Sakura chairman until June 1994, when he became a BoJ adviser, taking over as governor six months later.



Building success: David Wilson, left, chairman and chief executive of Wilson Bowden, one of Britain's biggest housebuilders, with Ian Robertson, finance director, at the announcement of the company's results yesterday. The company reported a 63.4 per cent rise in pre-tax profits from £41 million to £67 million.

Minorco shuts mine as earnings decline

WEAK commodity prices have forced Minorco, the mining, agribusiness and newsprint conglomerate, to shut down a nickel mine in Brazil and write down the assets of its Jerritt Canyon goldmine in the US. Minorco yesterday reported a \$68 million (£40 million) slide in net earnings before exceptional items to \$329 million for the year to December.

The company blamed weak copper and zinc prices and a fourth-quarter slump in the gold price to an 18-year low. A spokeswoman for Minorco said: "The outlook is gloomy but offset against that are good acquisition opportunities."

The company is paying a final dividend of 42 cents, unchanged from last year after a 22 cents interim payout.

Copyright placing

COPYRIGHT PROMOTIONS, the character and sports licensing agent, is raising £3.54 million through a share placing to acquire Leisureview, a supplier of military and aviation videos. It will pay up to £2.75 million for Leisureview, which in the year to July 1997 made pre-tax profits of £102,000 on sales of £2.9 million. It is issuing 4.38 million shares at 90p each in a two-for-five placing and open offer.

Healthy Intercare

INTERCARE GROUP, the healthcare company that supplies mobility products for the disabled and distributes pharmaceuticals, earned pre-tax £1.64 million profits in the 14 months to December 31. This compared with a previous loss of £1.12 million, when there was a £3.26 million loss on disposals. Earnings were 1.6p a share (adjusted 5.1p). The total dividend is 4p a share (3.5p), with a final 3.2p.

Pittards' uncertainty

PITTARDS, the leather goods company, suffered a fall in pre-tax profits in 1997 to £2.63 million from £3.6 million in the previous year and warned shareholders of the "considerable uncertainty" that continued to affect many of the markets where its products are sold. Earnings fell to 9.4p a share from 13.3p. The final dividend is held at 2.5p a share, making a total of 3.5p (3.25p). The shares fell 4 1/2 p to 52 1/2 p.

Wage worry at Preston

PRESTON NORTH END, the quoted football club, plunged into a £423,000 loss during the six months to December 31. Earnings of 14.0p reversed into losses of 21.0p a share. The company said the main concern was the level of players' wages. Preston said it is to write off the value of players over a shorter time span and that higher amortisation costs had been included in the half-year figures. There is no dividend.

Haden acquires MBS

HADEN MACLELLAN, the engineering group, is to buy MBS Distribution, the specialist fasteners distributor, for £24 million. MBS sales last year were £31.3 million and operating profits were £3 million. Haden raised pre-tax profits by 12 per cent to £17.2 million in the year to December 31. Adjusted earnings rose from 8.6p to 9.7p and dividends rise from 2.8p to 3.1p after payment of a 1.8p final, up from 1.6p.

Aegis to expand by acquisition in five Asian countries

By RAYMOND SNODDY, MEDIA EDITOR

AEGIS, the international advertising and marketing group, plans to expand through acquisitions in five Asian countries within the next six months as part of the company's globalisation strategy.

A deal has already been done in Malaysia, and further deals will follow in Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan and Australia.

"This will give us the basis of a network," Crispin Davis, chief executive, said yesterday. The deals will involve space buying companies or buying out advertising companies. Aegis is also close to announcing the acquisition of a US Internet company.

The acquisitions will be funded out of the £30 million a year free cash Aegis has been generating.

The news of the planned expansion came as Aegis announced a 15 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £45.6

million for the year to December 31, including an exceptional gain of £21 million.

The underlying profit increase was 10 per cent to £43.5 million - 28 per cent on a constant currency basis. Fully diluted earnings per share rose to 3.5p up 16 per cent on turnover up 6 per cent to £3.65 billion. The full-year dividend will rise 17 per cent to 0.7p.

Aegis said yesterday it had won \$702 million (£425.4 million) in new business last year, a 50 per cent increase. The new business included Telefonica, Kraft Jacobs Suchard, Oetker of Germany and Ameritech, the US telephone company.

Mr Davis said the increasing emphasis on planning, strategy and research as well as space buying had been decisive and added that Aegis intended to continue expanding in the research area.

A&W suffers sharp fall

By MARTIN BARROW

ALBRIGHT & WILSON, the speciality chemicals company, suffered a sharp fall in profits in 1997, hit by restructuring charges and the strong pound. In the year to December 31 pre-tax profits fell to £31.7 million from £62.5 million.

Exceptional charges totalled £28.9 million and included asset writedowns, redundancy costs and a provision against

environmental liabilities. The strength of sterling also had a significant impact. Operating profits, which came in 3 per cent lower at £68.4 million, would have been 14 per cent higher year-on-year.

The company has had a difficult relationship with the City since its 1995 demerger from Tenneco, a US company, with the shares showing little

gain on the flotation price of 150p. Paul Rocheleau, chief executive, struck a conciliatory note yesterday, saying the company boasted "significant potential".

Earnings from continuing operations fell to 13.6p a share from 14.4p in the previous year. The total dividend is lifted to 4.8p a share from 4.65p, with a final 7.15p.

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هناك من النحل

Equities hold steady

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1.15	1.10	Heavenly Breweries	1.125	+0.025	2.3	12.5
0.85	0.80	Woolacott	0.825	+0.025	3.0	10.0
0.75	0.70	Woolacott	0.725	+0.025	3.4	10.0

BANKS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1.15	1.10	Bank of Scotland	1.125	+0.025	2.3	12.5
0.85	0.80	Woolacott	0.825	+0.025	3.0	10.0

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1.15	1.10	Heavenly Breweries	1.125	+0.025	2.3	12.5
0.85	0.80	Woolacott	0.825	+0.025	3.0	10.0

BUILDING MATERIALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1.15	1.10	Heavenly Breweries	1.125	+0.025	2.3	12.5

CHEMICALS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1.15	1.10	Heavenly Breweries	1.125	+0.025	2.3	12.5

CONSTRUCTION

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1.15	1.10	Heavenly Breweries	1.125	+0.025	2.3	12.5

DISTRIBUTORS

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
1.15	1.10	Heavenly Breweries	1.125	+0.025	2.3	12.5

ENGINEERING VEHICLES

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MAKE THE SWITCH!

NatWest Streamline has developed the U.K.'s leading card processing business in North Yorkshire

North Yorkshire has one of the strongest economies in the North of England and offers an environment where dynamic business and an idyllic lifestyle go hand-in-hand.

NORTH YORKSHIRE WIDENING BUSINESS HORIZONS

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<http://www.pandora.co.uk/northofyork>

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ENGINEERING VEHICLES

High	Low
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DENZEL WASHINGTON
JOHN GOODMAN DONALD SUTHERLAND

Detective John Hobbes is searching for a criminal he's already met... already caught... and already killed.

FALLEN

Don't trust a soul.

TURNER PICTURES... ATLAS ENTERTAINMENT... GREGORY HOBLIT
DENZEL WASHINGTON JOHN GOODMAN DONALD SUTHERLAND
"FALLEN" EMBETH DAVIDTZ JAMES GARDOLEFMI ELIAS KOTERS
TAN OUI COLLEER ATWOOD
ELON DERSHOWITZ NICHOLAS KAZAN ROBERT CAVALLIO TED KUNDYLA
NICHOLAS KAZAN CHARLES ROVER DAWN STEEL GREGORY HOBLIT

FROM TOMORROW AT CINEMAS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Samuel L. Jackson talks to Carol Allen about his role in Tarantino's new movie

Samuel L. Jackson lowers his tall frame onto the low and squishy sofa, lights a cigarette and prepares to talk about his role as Ordell Robbie in Quentin Tarantino's latest film, *Jackie Brown*. At 49 he has the unlined face of a much younger man. His clothes, like his manner, are casual and relaxed.

Ordell, the hip-talking gun smuggler who fires words as fast as bullets, is, as Jackson points out, a very different kind of crook from the one he played in his previous outing with Tarantino as Jules in *Pulp Fiction*. "Jules is a moralistic kind of guy, Ordell Robbie has no morals. He has just one steadfast rule. Nothing and no one is going to get in his way. And if you cross him, he can be lethal. If you're part of his solution you're a great person. If you're part of his problem, he gets rid of you. But he's also personable, opinionated and funny. Quentin's always great fun to work with and as soon as I read the script I wanted to work on this character."

Jackson also has no hesitation in describing Ordell as the ultimate "super cool nigger": the last word a noun whose liberal use in the film has resulted in vociferous criticism from the film-maker Spike Lee. It is criticism Jackson firmly refutes.

"In my opinion Spike's the last person who should try and censor somebody's artistic endeavour. People have tried to do that to him for years and for him to do the same is ridiculous. It's how Ordell speaks, it's not negative. To him it's like saying 'guy, fella, whatever'. I think that Spike probably has a bigger beef with the fact that Quentin has made an interesting black movie."

The film, which opens in Britain next week, is regarded as Tarantino's homage to the action-led "blaxploitation" films of the Seventies, many of which featured Pam Grier, who plays the title role in *Jackie Brown*. And while *Jackie Brown* (like *Amistad*) is led by black characters, as opposed to being a totally black movie, it raises the question of whether a white film-maker like Tarantino has the right to trespass on the turf of black stories. Rejecting the notion, Jackson cites one of his earlier films, the highly praised *Fresh*, which was written and directed by the Jewish film-maker Boaz Yakin.

"Nobody else since, in my opinion, has written a film about the ghetto that is as sensitive and touching as that one. If it's the story you want to tell and you tell it from the heart and invest it with the right cast, you have a right to do so, whoever you are."

Jackson pays particular attention to the physical characteristics of the roles he plays, finding a different look for every film. As Jules in *Pulp Fiction* he sported a distinctive mass of grey curls; in Barry Levinson's sci-fi film *Sphere*, which also opens this month, he is totally bald; in another forthcoming film, *The Negotiator*, he wears his hair close-cropped as a police hostage negotiator; while in *Jackie Brown* he externalises the character's eccentric individuality with a pony tail and a braided beard.

"I had this idea about how I wanted him to look and Quentin wasn't sure, so I had the wig made and a little braid for my chin and suddenly everybody realised it would work. It comes from my affection for Hong Kong films, where the villains tend to be very distinctive."

Jackson made *Jackie Brown* and *Sphere* simultaneously, commuting from Levinson's set in San Francisco to Tarantino's in Los Angeles, and found the very different



Jackson: "If it's the story you want to tell, and you tell it from the heart, you have a right to do so, whoever you are"

Return of the tough act to follow

looks he had created helpful in switching from one character to the other. "I would put the hair and the braid on and I would immediately be back as Ordell. They were two enormously different films. *Sphere* is science fiction, taking place underwater. We worked in 20ft of water in huge sets and tanks and the atmosphere on the set was very different. Barry's very quiet, whereas Quentin fills the room, you know he's there, he'll laugh out loud during a take."

"Quentin's set is like a party. Barry's is like an interesting workplace where everybody's doing their job and enjoying themselves but nobody's doing it out loud."

For many people *Pulp Fiction* was the first time they noticed Jackson, but he had enjoyed a busy movie career before then, which included a Cannes prize-winning performance as Wesley Snipes's jive-crack-addicted

brother in *Jungle Fever* and roles in *Jurassic Park* and *Fresh*. He currently has three more films awaiting release: *The Negotiator*, in which he co-stars with Kevin Spacey; François Girard's *The Red Violin*; and the *Star Wars* prequel, in which he has taken a vow of silence. Although *Pulp Fiction* made him a more visible star, it was a later film, he claims, which made him a bankable one.

"*Die Hard With a Vengeance* put me into the world arena, because it was the highest-grossing film that year, which means a ton of people saw it. Bruce Willis was the star but people were interested in my character too. I love that genre of film. I watch a lot of them and it's always a joy to do them."

Hailing from Tennessee, Jackson still has traces of a southern drawl in his speech. With his father absent from his childhood, he was raised by his mother, a buyer for a clothes store, and studied drama and marine biology at Morehouse College in Atlanta in the Sixties at the time of the civil rights movement.

"I flew to Memphis the day after Martin Luther King was killed and took part in the march. It was a great time to be young and to be part of that time of celebration and outrage and transition, which made wonderful changes to our society that have benefited the kids who are around now, including my own 15-year-old daughter and her friends."

There are, though, still only a handful of black star actors: Jackson himself, Sidney Poitier, Morgan Freeman, Danny Glover, Laurence Fishburne, Eddie Murphy and Denzel Washington. But the times, believes Jackson, are changing. "Back at the time when I chose to be an actor, my mom wanted to know what I was going to do for a living for a long time. Now it's become a viable choice and hopefully, because of the things that Morgan's done, I've done, Denzel's done, producers now see that there is a cadre of young people of colour, who are capable of doing more than just those hood movies."

"I read a lot of scripts now that aren't race specific. Even so, I have to admit that Hollywood is still more interested in finding the next Tom Cruise than the next Denzel Washington."

Jackie Brown opens on March 20; Sphere on March 31

Playing favourites

POP
Marc Cohn
Dingbells, NMT

IT IS seven years since Marc Cohn last played here and five since his most recent album, but his loyal fan base turned out in force to greet his return. Best known as the writer of *Walking in Memphis*, a joyous celebration of Southern music which namechecks everyone from W.C. Handy to Al Green and Elvis, Cohn at least won't have gone hungry during his sabbatical. Cher's hit cover version of the song should keep him in grins'n' tears for a long time to come.

Cohn was here to promote *Burning the Daze*, his new album which is finally released next week. Like its two predecessors it is full of literate songs with familiar themes of love and loss, redemption and renewal, hewn from the same great American motherhood that the Band and Bruce Springsteen have worked so successfully. He played only four songs from the new album and under other circumstances one might have wanted more. But as it was so long since we had seen him, Cohn rightly judged that his audience also expected to hear the old

favourites. An engaging performer with a ready wit and easy rapport, he created an atmosphere that felt more like a Greenwich Village coffee-house than a dank Monday night in Camden. He opened solo at the piano, accompanying his richly textured voice with rippling chords on *Silver Thunderbird*, a song of lost youth as much as a paen to the great American automobile. The affecting *Old Soldier* followed, a song he wrote for David Crosby, before Shane Fontaine joined him on guitar.

The lack of bass and drums brought a refreshingly intimate quality to some already warm and personal songs, without any noticeable loss of depth. New compositions included the powerful *Already Home*, about viewing the promised land, but not being allowed to enter, and the tender *Healing Hands*, a song detailing his own search for salvation after the break-up of his marriage and the struggle to raise his kids.

Turn on Your Radio, another new composition with a felicitous call-and-response refrain, worked superbly in the duo format and *Walking in Memphis* sounded as stirring as ever. One of those great American place-name songs that makes you want to get on the first plane out there. Towards the end someone called out that they had a bus to catch and would he play *True Companion* before they had to leave? Cohn duly obliged. It was that kind of night.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Feminine touchés

TWO women who might not have had much to say to each other but who have plenty to say to the rest of us made the running in separate programmes over the week. Jenny Pittman trains racehorses for a living and Camille Paglia writes books, makes speeches and generally preads the 1990s feminist circuit, provoking all sides in that particular dichotomy. Pittman strikes me as far the more admirable of the two and I would venture that she has done more to advance the cause of women, without ever, I daresay, giving such high-mindedness a second thought.

We met Pittman in *The Queen of Westbrooks House* (Radio 4FM, Tuesday), an earthy and excellent documentary which hung a microphone over Pittman's shoulder and let her dictate the course of the programme. By the end of the half-hour you felt you knew exactly what the stable lad meant when he confided the secret of staying in work at Pittman's stables: "Take your bollockings and keep your mouth shut."

Pittman has a kind of no-nonsense, almost snoring way of delivering opinions which is entirely in keeping with her profession. Out on the gallops, she suddenly and startlingly says something that bears a passing resemblance to French. We are not hearing things: there is a shortage of stable lads so Pittman imports them from France. There is also a shortage in Ireland, she

RADIO

says, so Irish trainers come to England to hire them: perhaps that is why there is a shortage here. French stable lads in England and English ones in Ireland? Where do the French get stable lads from? The Aegean?

Pittman is not one to linger on such matters, she was off up the gallops in men's clothing. With good reason, what with the climate and shortcomings in the design department: "They always finish women's coats just below the belly button so whenever you see me on the gallops I've always got a man's coat on."

I doubt that anything so practical ever enraptures Paglia, who gave the latest of the *Sounding the Century Lectures* (Radio 3, Saturday), which was about the "modern battle of the sexes". This was the infamous session recorded last year at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London: Paglia walked out during the question and answer session. I couldn't quite see what all the fuss was about. Paglia has always talked in lumpy soundbites ("feminism has become over-absorbed with expanding the privileges of upper-middle class professional women"). Faced with that, Pittman would have buttoned her draught excluded and stomped to the next lecture.

PETER BARNARD

هكمنم النحل

Curmudgeonly bark short on bite

NEW MOVIES: Paper-thin emotions and Jack Nicholson going through his repertoire of faces really are *As Good as It Gets*, says Geoff Brown

At the beginning he punishes a neighbour's dog by hurling it down his apartment building's rubbish chute. Every morsel of human contact is garnished with a snarl. Mostly he stays put in his apartment, writing romantic novels. But the misanthrope sneaks out to his local cafe for breakfast and to harangue everybody in sight, such as the couple caught in deep conversation as he passes down the aisle. "People who talk in metaphors," he advises them, "ought to shampoo my crotch."

Such is life with Jack Nicholson in *As Good as It Gets*, a bumper bundle of comedy and tears loosely tied together by producer-director James L. Brooks, the perpetrator of *Terms of Endearment*. How funny you find the results depends on your taste for insult comedy or your level of addiction to Nicholson's face-pulling. The role of Melvin Udall, an obsessive-compulsive at war with all mankind, was scarcely created to extend the actor's range. We get the arched eyebrows, the beady stares, the leers, the whines.

Nor is there anything new in the path the film follows. Following Brooks's fashion, it zig-zags towards its goal, but the goal is never in doubt. Melvin must be humanised, the heart of gold revealed. So he gets himself surrounded by various souls who are also in need of healing. There is Helen Hunt as the one waitress who can cope with Nicholson's tirade, a hard-pressed single mother with an asthmatic son. There is Greg Kinnear as a gay artist who gets the stuffing knocked out of him by a mugger. And do not forget the dog, which starts the process of softening Melvin's arteries when the curmudgeon takes care of him during Kinnear's recuperation in hospital.

If the emotions involved had been genuine, *As Good as It Gets* might have been quite a touching comedy about breaking free of personal problems and reaching out to others. But it is hard to take anything for real in a film so determined to spoon-feed its audience. It's not a subtle point that you're making, Kinnear tells Nicholson during an early altercation. Brooks never has use for subtlety: his years of experience on television sitcoms have left him craving immediate impact, swift swings in mood and artificial plotting. None of this helps characters to grow into rounded people. Partly by force of her warm personality, Hunt makes a little headway with her waitress, Carol, but Nicholson is left high and dry with no details to explain Udall's disposition: all we can do is bask in or shrivel from a star on the rampage.

Many people, clearly, are content to bask, and swallow whatever gags or sentiment Brooks thrusts down their throats. The film has performed well at the box office, and collected six Oscar nominations, including those for Best Picture, Actor, Actress and Original Script. But the fans must be willing to forgive very easily. Or have cast-iron stomachs: for anyone bothered by sensitive insides, *As Good as It Gets* has the lingering charm of a tainted takeaway curry.

Wag the Dog, directed by Barry Levinson, is a far tastier dish. This time two Oscar nominations have been awarded, for Best Actor (Dustin Hoffman) and Best Screenplay Adaptation. David

As Good as It Gets

Ocean West End
15, 138 mins
Jack Nicholson goes on the rampage

Wag the Dog
Warner West End
15, 95 mins
Spry political satire

Fallen
Warner West End
15, 124 mins
Demonic thriller with pretensions galore

Marnet and Hilary Henkin's witty script derives from a novel called *American Hero* by Larry Beinhart, although the film's satire is so topical that you would swear the whole thing was thought up in January.

Consider the situation. While fighting a re-election campaign, a sexual scandal involving a young White House visitor hits the American President in the face. What to do? A spin doctor supreme (Robert De Niro) deflects public attention by inventing a war for the country to fight, and hiring a Hollywood producer to stage it. The country chosen for the imaginary adversary is Albania: a few weeks ago this seemed a lovely joke, but the slaughter of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo has taken off some of its shine.

No headline news, though, can dent the droll performance of Dustin Hoffman as Stanley Motus (the "t" is silent), the Hollywood producer desperate for the world's applause. Right from his first line of dialogue — "Get me my veggie shake, Ramon" — you know this will be a characterisation to cherish.

The film is at its sharpest when Hoffman orchestrates the war footage: suddenly you see how easily we can be fooled by a woman actress holding a dogged cat, running away from background footage. De Niro plays almost the sidekick's role, standing on the sidelines, handing out the latest crazy demand so that Hoffman can say, "I'm working on it." As for Anne Heche, she is the straight man: the presidential aide bemused by these media games.

The film's first half is much the better, for the script never quite knows what to do with itself once the basic situation is established. With the phoney war running on TV, the characters' problem becomes the film-makers': and once Hoffman starts playing with an American soldier left behind enemy lines, you can almost hear the rip appearing as the material is overstretched.

But even with its thin patches, Levinson's film remains a treat: bright and intelligent, compactly made, suavely performed, one of those precious Hollywood films that leave you begging for more of the same.

Instead we get *Fallen*. This gets off to a cheery start with Denzel Washington ruminating on the soundtrack: "I want to tell you about the time I almost died." So he does, in the convoluted way often found in films determined to camouflage routine material. The business involves serial killings and demon possession: the films used for inspiration include *Seven* and *The Exorcist*. You expect something better from Nicholas Kazan, responsible for the script of *Reversal of Fortune*.

Washington plays a homicide detective, Hobbes by



Melvin Udall, played by Jack Nicholson, prepares to throw his neighbour's dog, Verdell (played by a Brussels Griffon called Jill, Cruft's fans) down the rubbish chute in *As Good as It Gets*

name, affable and charming in the usual Washington manner. For a sidekick he has John Goodman. A chain of grisly murders puts them on the trail of an evil spirit called *Azazel*, who takes up temporary residence in assorted humans, and is passed along by touch. Indeed, the film could be called *Touch of Evil*, after Orson Welles's classic.

There is a touch, too, of Welles's grandiloquence in the direction of Gregory Hoblit. Look how the camera circles ominously as Washington enjoys a cryptic talk with theology professor Emabeth Davidez. Feel the paranoia whipped up onscreen as Washington walks the crowded streets, *Azazel's* followers all around him. But Hoblit is no Welles; the flourishes feel empty, especially as the script grows unduly complicated the more the mystery advances.

Aside from Washington's gleaming starlight and Goodman's breezy character turn, there is not much to enjoy, beyond smiling perhaps at the special credit for Donald Sutherland's wardrobe ("courtesy of Ermesegildo Zegna"). But however sharp his clothes, we have seen Sutherland's icy lieutenant too often, along with much else in *Fallen*. Possibly the film will seem better once sociologists expound on Hollywood's rage for demonic thrillers in the old millennium's dying days. At the moment it just seems your usual hamburger, overcooked rather than rare.

Hollywood has nothing more to offer this week. But

the rest of the world still exists, and audiences can play armchair explorer at numerous events around London. The Goethe Institute and the ICA are currently hosting *Berlin Daze*, a cycle of recent German productions. Tonight, the National Film Theatre welcomes the twelfth London Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. Tomorrow, the fourth Australian Film Festival arrives at the Barbican Cinema, before venturing round the country.

The film receiving the most screenings (three) is *Road to Nowhere*, as in, or nothing: a droll, quiet comedy about life in a small township. Opening shots capture the hurly-burly:

someone cuts roses, another plays bowls, or turns on the radio, or scratches his chest. Of such things whole days are made. But then something actually happens: a car ferrying four lady bowlers from a tournament overturns. Will the emergency services reach them in time? Will pig farmer Maurie ever move his van? Should Jean go to hospital? And what should Margot do with those vegetables?

Big questions, obviously, and Sue Brooks's film, written by Alison Tilson, is so drolly laconic, so sympathetic towards its characters, that you settle back happily to watch them answered.

Touching stuff

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

AS GOOD AS IT GETS
Leslie Isaiah Thomas, 20: A pleasant little movie — laughs, tears and a very cute dog. Damian Samuels, 20: Some might find it a little too slushy. Sarah Crook, 18: Jack Nicholson is intelligent and melancholic. Touching stuff.

WAG THE DOG
Leslie: Playwright David

Marnet's script is something special. Smart, caustic and ironic. Damian: Dustin Hoffman's performance is delicious. You'll have as much fun watching it as he obviously did performing it. Sarah: Very intriguing, particularly in light of what is happening in Washington at the moment. Great entertainment. Emma: Hoffman should definitely get an Oscar. The deluded artist has never been so well portrayed.



FALLEN
Leslie: Looks interesting, but has little more to offer. Damian: It started off well, only to become a very daft movie. Sarah: Denzel Washington is good. The film isn't. Emma: What a confused film. It lost me.

Close encounter of the bright kind

CONTACT
Warner, PG, 1997

IF YOU had to choose one human being to be our ambassador in outer space, you could do far worse than Jodie Foster. An astronomy nut since childhood, she receives a radio message from a distant star, which includes a building kit for an intergalactic travel machine. Robert Zemeckis's film, based on the novel by Carl Sagan, is expansive, intelligent, and generally absorbing, although the director pushes his luck trying to marry silly characters like John Hurt's billionaire with philosophical thoughts about the meaning of life. James Woods is good value, as ever, as America's National Security Adviser. A rental release.

EVENT HORIZON
CIC, 18, 1997

"I'M PICKING up trace life forms," Joely Richardson says, twiddling knobs in her space ship, "but I can't get a lock on the location." Ignorance in this case is bliss, for the life forms turn out to be denizens of hell. This sci-fi extravaganza from Paul Anderson, the director of *Mortal Combat*, offers plenty of exploding bodies and loud supernatural overtones. But none of the characters makes much impact, not even Laurence Fishburne, as the ship's seasoned captain, or Sam Neill's ambiguous scientist. One to gawp at and forget. Available to rent.

HOLLOW TRIUMPH
Second Sight, PG, 1948

ONE shot of the nameplate on the door announcing "Dr Victor E. Bartok, Consulting Psychologist", and we know we're in the high Forties. Holly-

wood's golden age of fanciful thrillers. This is a very well-made period specimen, with fantastic photography by the gifted John Alton and a livelier, tougher performance than usual from Paul Henreid in the dual role of desperate criminal and scarred doctor, whose identity he tries to take over. Steve Sekely, the film's Hungarian director, has done little better.

PHOTOGRAPHING FAIRIES
Entertainment, 15, 1997

NICK WILLING'S curious film takes a fictional approach to the Cottingley fairy affair. Toby Stephens plays the photographer, widowed a day after his marriage, who journeys into the fairy world. Striking images do not compensate for a muddled script, destined to leave viewers scratching their heads. A rental release.

THE SQUARE CIRCLE
Blue Dolphin, 15, 1997

GENDER confusion and cross-dressing are not customary topics of Indian popular cinema. But Anil Palekar's Hindi film offers them up in a slender plot diversified by the usual musical numbers. A young village girl is abducted, then raped. Her reluctant saviour is a transvestite who, to ease her journey back home, dresses the girl as a man: moustache, short hair, trousers. Broad playing and gauche direction limit the film's success, but it has undoubted novelty appeal.

NEW ON VIDEO

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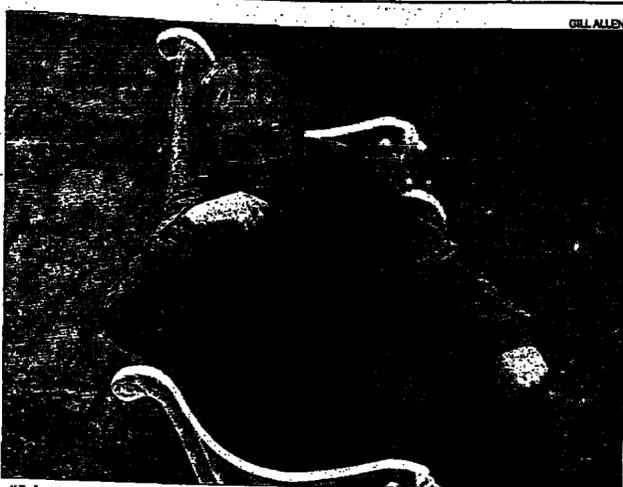
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May the force be with him



"I don't really like children that much, but I love their reactions," David Wood says

A career spent thinking small

Daniel Rosenthal meets David Wood, the man behind the stage version of *Babe* and other children's classics

Exactly 30 years ago, David Wood was to be found on the roof of Cheltenham College chapel armed with a machinegun, awaiting his cue to begin one of the most notorious bursts of violence in British cinema history.

It feels strange to learn that in 1968 the young actor helping Malcolm McDowell to carry out the climactic massacre in *J.F.*... had just written a stage adaptation of Hans Andersen's *The Tinder Box*, the first of 40 shows that would earn Wood the unofficial title of children's playwright laureate. By the time his bloody rebellion as Johnny in *J.F.*... was shocking the middle-aged, his first wholesome play was delighting the under-tens.

Three decades later, with his adaptation of *Babe*, the Sheep Pig midway through a six-month tour, Wood is constantly reminded of *J.F.*... — the deafening bursts from the sten gun he fired at Cheltenham started a ringing in his right ear which has never ceased.

The influence of the film's late director, Lindsay Anderson, is a happier legacy. "Lindsay was never prepared to compromise for the sake of commercial gain," he says, "and neither am I."

Wood's ability and desire to entertain children had surfaced long before John Hoo, then director of the Swan Theatre, Worcester, where Wood was in rep, suggested he adapt *The Tinder Box*. "In my early teens I started performing magic at children's parties. That taught me a great deal about how the very young respond en masse."

For several years, his acting kept pace with his writing. He played the son in John Mortimer's *A Voyage Round My Father* and found plenty of television work. "But gradually I came to feel so passionately about children's theatre that it took over my life. No one else was doing what John Hoo called 'proper' plays for children, making their enjoyment the absolute priority without worrying about the adults."

His "pantomime substitutes" (rewritings of classics

such as *Mother Goose*) were Christmas hits, and in 1976 he had his first West End success with *The Gingerbread Man* (produced by Cameron Mackintosh, who remains a dedicated ally). At one point in the late 1970s, there were 16 Wood productions running simultaneously in England.

The combined audience for his work now runs into millions. But the low media profile of children's theatre, coupled, with its frustrating economics — "ticket prices are always two-thirds lower than for adult shows, but our production costs are often the same or higher" — mean he



The youthful Wood in *J.F.*...

has never enjoyed the fame or fortune guaranteed to an adult writer/director with an equivalent track record.

In an eloquent introduction to *Theatre for Children* (Faber), the book he co-wrote last year with Janet Grant, he explains how, over the past decade, the gap in children's theatre between production costs and revenue from ticket sales, subsidy and sponsorship has widened.

That change has obliged him to rely more heavily than he would have liked on adaptations of books with proven box office appeal to his core audience of five to ten-year-olds, at the expense of original scripts. His successful versions of Roald Dahl's *The BFG* and *The Witches*, and now Dick King Smith's *Babe*, "might be viewed as a compromise. But it has often been a

question of doing an adaptation or doing nothing."

Theatre for Children was conceived as a guide for anyone attempting to please the "most passionate and demanding" audience in the world. "The moment a play becomes boring, children start kicking the seats or asking for the loo. In the crudest sense, my job is to stop them going to the loo, to ensure they cannot bear to miss a moment. That is not easy. Clarity, in words and actions, is all-important."

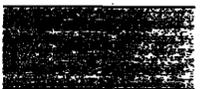
At 53, Wood still resembles Johnny sufficiently for students to stop him in the street and ask, "aren't you in *J.F.*...?" He has an effervescent, boyish enthusiasm which frequently propels him to the edge of his chair. Perhaps writing for children is the secret to staying young? "I have daughters of 21 and 18, so I must be getting on a bit," he says. "I certainly don't think of myself as a child, but it worries me when I think of all the children's authors who were screwed up: Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, J.M. Barrie. I would hate to think I was somehow stunted."

For several years now, there must have been boys and girls enjoying *The BFG* whose parents also had their first experience of theatre at a Wood show. "That continually sometimes brings a lump to the throat of a man who is 'not overtly sentimental' and puts him in a perfect position to judge whether children have changed. Amid so much concern over the desensitising effects of computers and video, his view is reassuring.

"Largely because of television, kids have a streetwise veneer which is much thicker than it was 30 years ago. But if you watch them in a theatre you see that they haven't really changed. What's wonderful is that no matter how much technology we throw at them, if you use a bit of cardboard to create a shadow puppet they will gasp. I don't really like children that much, but I love their reactions."

The Babe, four continues until May 26. For venues, call 01865 884240

On the face of it, Peter Hall's revival of Beckett might have been lifted by some tornado from the Old Vic, where it played with such success last year, and carried, safe in the eye of the storm, to his company's new habitat at the Piccadilly. The "country road" beside which the two tramps hopelessly hover is still John Gunter's big blue box and bare brown flooring. Their tree still looks like part of an amputated spider, or maybe a small family of ossified worms. Even the moon is recognisably the same cardboard circle that last year saw Ben Kingsley's trousers fall down as Alan Howard grabbed the rope belt intended to hang them both. But both have been re-



placed, as have all the supporting roles. Alan Dobie is now the rope-belted Estragon and Julian Glover his fellow failure-in-suicide, Vladimir. And however similar his appearance, this means that Hall's production is surprisingly different in essence. Indeed, the only common factor is that, like Howard and Kingsley, Glover and Dobie speak with Beckett's native lilt. And, again, that's less because of the Irish resonances this gives the play — though "we've lost our rights", "we got rid of them" is now a particularly lugubrious exchange — than because it suits the rhythms of the dialogue better than English accents.

Howard exuded intellectual enthusiasm and dreamy intensity from inside a tacky grey mac. Kingsley was an earthy troll whose red, garbled face concealed vulnerability and an odd pettishness. Glover's Vladimir keeps the raincoat, but comes across as passive and baffled, a gentle giant glumly in search of a beanstalk to climb. And with his striped vest, wispy mutton-chop whiskers and battered brown togs, Dobie's Estragon looks like a Victorian cat-burglar — and, old though he is, seems a pretty nimble, sprightly person, too. Kingsley's production is lucid and engrossing, you might argue that these changes demonstrate that, like so many major plays, *Godot* can bear a variety of interpretations; but you must also admit that they strain the text.



Beckett watches as Alan Dobie (Estragon) and Julian Glover (Vladimir) take over from Ben Kingsley and Alan Howard

Beckett's Vladimir is resilient, inquisitive, excitable, and as hopeful as anybody can be in so grim a universe. Estragon is pessimistic, sullen, phlegmatic, and not interested in the prospect of finding salvation in the form of the ever-elusive Godot. There are times in Hall's revival when the two men seem almost to have changed places.

That helps to explain the other big difference between Hall's restaging and his production last year. Thanks partly to Dobie's bouncy tenor voice and feisty swagger — his cry of "all my lousy life I've crawled about in the mud, and you talk to me about scenery!" got a first-night laugh — this revival is funnier. A jokey Viennese waltz and an embry-

onic cloggie dance between Vladimir and Estragon reinforce the impression. So does Terence Rigby's Pozzo, as much the smug English landlord as Denis Quillay last year, but more of the droll poseur and comic ham. This ensures we don't forget that Beckett's play is a tragedy, not a comedy, and that his characters are sup-

posed to be clowns as well as tramps. But I must repeat, with more force, the question I asked at the Vic. Is Hall's revival harsh enough? Are the characters desperate enough? Despite the odd stricken silence, anguished look and strangled sob, I don't think so.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Xenophobia by any other name

to such gems as *The Flying Nuns*, *The Partridge Family*, and no fewer than 15 episodes of *Bewitched*, we can expect a fine line in one-liners but not a lot of finesse. "I haven't had a good hock in a long time," says Giles, sipping his wine. "You should get out more often," retorts his trusty family retainer Fred (Moray Watson). And so it goes.

There's something of the boy scout about Slade's technique. If Giles and Libby rub each other up enough they might crackle into life. After 45 minutes of heavy rubbing this bit of primitive firelighting finally works when, in spite of

You Say Tomatoes Basingstoke

himself, Giles falls for Libby between the spotted dick and the discovery of condoms. The trick here is to keep the posturing as evenly matched as possible. The problem with David Taylor's creaky production is that it's shamelessly one-sided. English xenophobia is presented as a quirky virtue.

Americans are despicable because they are a nation of

spoilt, flag-waving, Disney-loving, war-mongering, environmentally unfriendly illiterates. Giles declaims to fervid applause from the audience. You can see why Slade — who has written for stars such as Jack Lemmon, Mia Farrow and Tom Conti — neglected to open this on Broadway. Timothy doesn't really convince as either a genuine piece of upper crust or a literary Valentino. He is a sitcom eccentric: all odd socks, wobbly teeth and wearing pyjamas to the station. By contrast Susan Jameson's Libby is far too yielding, believably New York, and convincingly in need of affection. Ultimately the romantic bridge that Slade tries to build between them proves too flimsy for this preposterous mismatch.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

NEW JAZZ ALBUMS

■ LOUIS SCLAVIS *Dances et Autres Scènes* (Label Bleu LBLC 6616) THE elegance, grace and wit of French jazz in general, and of the music produced by multi-instrumentalist Louis Sclavis in particular, is still cruelly undervalued in the UK, occasional fleeting Bath Festival appearances by some of France's leading improvisers notwithstanding.

Sclavis's music is a typically rich Gallic concoction, influenced and informed by everything from early music, through folk and accordion-based popular forms, to classical (his last ECM recording was inspired by Rameau). This album focuses on dance rhythms from tangos to waltzes, and features a characteristically unconventional band — cello, accordions, violin and assorted percussion instruments in addition to the leader's clarinet, saxophones and flute — producing a variety of intriguing textures and moods from a series of musical sketches, ranging from the straightforwardly uplifting to the darkly brooding.

■ BILL FRISSELL *Gone, Just Like a Train* (Nonesuch 7559-7947-2) (AVOWEDLY) plumbly his childhood — and, by extension, the US musical tradition in general — for inspiration, and thereby continuing to plough a similar, though jazzier, furrow to Ry Cooder's, guitarist Bill Frisell touches a large number of apparently disparate bases on this consistently stimulating trio album. Weird, sluggish blues, wacky waltzes, slow shuffles, country-flavoured noodles, softly chugging boogies — all appear here. But it is arguably the more straightforward rocking-out tracks (on which the presence of rock-session drummer supreme Jim Keltner is a distinct advantage) that provide the highlights of this trio recording, featuring some sparky interplay between drummer and leader, but firmly grounded by the utterly dependable bass of Viktor Krauss.

CHRIS PARKER

A test of togetherness for the odd couple

Music-making transcends the puny considerations of the physical world, of course, and yet it is sometimes tempting to dwell on the incongruities involved in its production. Take the partnership of cellist Heinrich Schiff and pianist Till Fellner, for example: the former a dominating, ursine presence, the latter (less than half his age) with his slight, boyish frame. It seems an unlikely combination, and one to be tested in the two-concert series of complete Beethoven works for cello and piano.

Schiff's generous tone is never in danger of being dwarfed by Fellner's, even with the piano lid fully open. Yet neither is Fellner overshadowed, not because of the volume of tone he produces, but because his playing has such immediacy and strength of character. The ear is constantly delighted by his turns of phrase and subtle shaping of line, so that the backdrop to Schiff's playing is never less than vibrant

RECITAL Schiff/Fellner Wigmore Hall

and often a thing of joy in itself.

These considerations are particularly significant in Beethoven's two Op 5 cello sonatas, the earliest to present the two instruments on quite such equal terms, and it was good to hear Op 5 No 2 in G Minor on Tuesday night done with such care for the clarity and spontaneity of dialogue. While it would not be true to say that the two instruments achieved the perfect synthesis, they did nevertheless achieve a complementarity that was no less satisfying.

The other sonata heard on Tuesday night was the much later Op 102 No 1 in D, whose first movement was delivered with due consideration for the interaction of declamatory and lyrical elements. The sombre tones of the slow movement were gradually

warmed by the rays of the sun, and after a skilfully engineered transition, the finale was a tour de force of contrapuntal virtuosity.

The programme was completed by two of Beethoven's sets of variations for the same combination: those on *Bei Männern, welche Liebe fühlen* and *Ein Mädchen oder Weibchen* from Mozart's *Magic Flute*. Both were delightfully done, the former with utmost charm, the latter with its mock-tragic penultimate variation turned into something deeper by Schiff's whispered half-note.

After such scintillating rapport on stage, it was almost comical to return to the mundane world of stage etiquette and witness rather less impressive co-ordination. The two artists seemed determined not to bow in unison, and Fellner actually left the platform while Schiff was still acknowledging applause. The cycle is completed tonight.

BARRY MILLINGTON

NEW CLASSICAL CDs: Serious folk song; inspired partners; Canadian fire

VOCAL Hilary Finch

■ BEETHOVEN *Folk Songs* Holzmair/Trio Fontenay Philips 442 784-2 ** £15.49 THE *Pulse of an Irishman* races in the voice of Wolfgang Holzmair and the deft fingers of the Trio Fontenay, all ready for St Patrick next Tuesday. But the master of the jig here is Beethoven. His settings of Irish, Scottish and Welsh folk songs, made between 1809 and 1820, pleased their Scottish publisher George Thomson so much that he likened their recreative genius to that of Shakespeare.

Twenty of the 176 settings are on offer here, together with an illuminating essay by Barry Cooper on Thomson's collaboration with Beethoven in transforming folk melody into transforming folk melody into a song. Although he is sorely tested by the tongue-twisting blarney of the above-mentioned jig, Holzmair's baritone is particularly engaging in *Croghan a Venue*, and the country green of *Loden-wear* is donated to waken Sir Walter Scott's *Lords and Ladies Gay*. Deutsche Grammophon's

comprehensive seven-disc survey of Beethoven's folksong arrangements (Vol 17 of their Beethoven Edition, DG 433 786 2GCB7) has already alerted us to a still neglected aspect of Beethoven's imagination: this single disc, though humbler and sometimes blander, should not be overlooked.

John Higgins

■ ROBERTO ALAGNA *Verdi Arias* Berlin Phil/Abbado EMI CDC 5665673 *** £15.99

THE presence of Claudio Abbado and the Berlin Philharmonic for an opera recital is a luxury accorded few singers. But here they are backing Roberto Alagna in his first Verdi set, and the combination works superbly. Abbado reminds all who listen of the great Verdi performances he gave during the years when he was in charge at La Scala: the introduction to the tenor's Act III aria from *Forza*, full of lyrical melancholy, is just one example. Alagna responds by being in best voice. Together they go straight for

Verdi's heaviest roles. Forget the Fenonas and the Ducas. It is the likes of Otello and Radames who provide the material here. Those who claimed before and after his appearances in *Don Carlos* that Alagna was only a light tenor will have to think again. The death scene from *Otello* unwraps a voice full of animal strength, while Rodolfo's *Quando le sere from Luisa Miller* shows him able to spin a long arching line with the ease of a Pavarotti. Only in *Di quella pira* from *Traviata* does he resort to shouting. Otherwise this is a top drawer disc in which every word is made to count.

Barry Millington

■ HANDEL *Music for the Royal Fireworks: Concerto a due cori* Tafelmusik/Lanon Sony Vivarte SK 63073 *** £15.49

THE Canadian period-instrument ensemble Tafelmusik is not nearly as well known in Britain as it should be, but at least we have its fine series of recordings to enjoy. The latest brings together Handel's Fire-

works *Music with the three Concerti a due cori*, HWV 332-4, and every movement displays the vibrancy and urgency of Tafelmusik's playing. The commitment and involvement of each player is evident from both the photographs in the booklet and the intensity of the playing.

The *Concerti a due cori*, so named because of their scoring for two choirs of wind instruments, allow us to savour the virtuosity of Tafelmusik's horn and oboe players, while enjoying familiar music recycled in the composer's inimitable style from *Messiah* and other oratorios.

The ensemble's accounts of the *Fireworks Music* similarly fizz and sparkle in a mood of outdoor jubilation such as might have greeted the premiere in Green Park celebrating the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1749.

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

Sarah Dunant takes pains to understand the appeal of suffering

In the early days of the punk movement, the delicious Siouxsie (of Siouxsie and the Banshees) walked into a London pub be-decked in leather and leading a half-naked man on a leash with a spiked dog collar round his neck. She ordered herself a drink and the dog/man a bowl of water. The surrounding clientele, appalled and fascinated, said nothing.

The English (I use the devalued term specifically here) have always been ambivalent about their sexual perversions. It's not that they don't like them — flogging has long been known as *La Vice Anglaise* — more that they don't know how to fit them into polite society (a situation which punk and the dynamic duo of Westwood/McLaren explored so brilliantly). While over the years our society may seem to be progressively less polite, the question is: are we ready for a full-blown defence of masochism?

Anita Phillips, lecturer, writer and culture-surfer, thinks we are, and her slim volume makes some wonderfully big claims: asserting that masochism is an intelligent, creative, misunderstood perversion which demonstrates "how psychologically healing sexual pain can be, in transforming inner trouble into something that your body can take and survive." It is to her credit that while she doesn't deliver all that she promises (we would be talking social/sexual revolution if she did), she certainly throws down some elegant gauntlets.

She is at her best when righting wrongs, analysing the way that the word masochism has become a lazy cultural catch-all, which denies its intensity and its sexual specificity. Tracing it from its naming (Sacher-Masoch was a turn-of-the-century Polish writer who lived and wrote a fantasy of a man enslaved by a dominant woman), she goes straight for the psychoanalytic jugular, attacking the way that sadism and masochism have since then become routinely lumped together.

Decoding the old joke that the only way to hurt a masochist is not to hurt them, she looks at the different needs and

Do you really want to make me cry?

illuminating and exciting — but rather that it is too good to be true. The way Phillips argues it, masochists have everything going for them: powerful jobs, healthy psyches, understanding, role-playing partners, great sex and the time and money to make the fantasies work. Put like that, masochism sounds like a lifestyle solution for the movers and shakers of the Nineties. Losers and non-Barclaycard holders need not apply.

Underneath, though, there is a potent flaw in her argument, one that she is aware of. Masochism is powerful precisely because it breaks the rules. Its fantasies are transgressive, subversive, often compulsive. In its pursuit of pleasure it embraces pain, humiliation, degradation and shame. It is the dark side of sex. That is part of its spice, part of the need it fulfils. Take that away, accept it, integrate it, celebrate it and it loses much of its power. You have only to look at 90s fashion shoots to see what happens when you bring it into the light. The images become not only anodyne but mildly ridiculous.

The reality is that genuine masochism is a minority taste. It makes one person hot while leaving another cold. That's how it should be. Get everyone to like it and it would lose its outlaw status. Make it respectable and why should you want to do it? In the end, to defend it too successfully simply defeats its purpose.

As Anita Phillips knows only too well. Witness the titillating postscript to the book, where her lover reminds her of the sexual contract that they have written between them. Reading it again, she says, makes her smile and blush. But we, the reader, are not allowed to see it. Some things, it seems, should be kept in the dark. They taste better that way.

CLAIRE PARK

A DEFENCE OF MASOCHISM

By Anita Phillips

Faber, £9.99

ISBN 0 571 19042 1

compulsions driving sadism and masochism; showing that while the sadist is only interested in inflicting pain and having total control over the suffering he or she causes, the masochist wants pain because it triggers pleasure, and needs a willing accomplice who understands — and agrees — when to stop. Put an S with an M and, from the masochist's point of view, you have the couple from hell.

Her defence of masochism revolves round the transfiguring power of sex and sexual fantasy and the fact that what masochists crave and achieve through pain — a temporary loss of ego and identity — is in itself a fundamentally healthy psychological experience.

Of course, as a feminist as well as a masochist (she admits up front to being both), she has to avoid tying herself up in ideological knots when it comes to heterosexual sex. With one version of feminism — the American McKinnon/Dworkin axis — arguing that all penetration is rape, the idea of women allowing men to cause them pain in order to give them pleasure is bound to be contentious. (Which no doubt explains why the most overt and triumphant espousals of masochism have come from within the gay community, where no one needs to apologise to anyone for the tyranny of patriarchy.)

Phillips defends her position robustly, first by pointing out that by its very existence masochism is a creative subversion of patriarchy (the masochist getting pleasure out of being the oppressed), and second by arguing passionately that masochists are not victims. She insists they are usually people with a particularly strong sense of self, who in their everyday lives are often assertive and powerful, and thus actively seek loss of power and ego to redress the balance and somehow complete themselves.

It's an intriguing thesis which opens up a fashionable fin-de-siècle landscape in which powerful female bond managers enjoy chastisement from their stay-at-home husbands, and Cabinet ministers (if the trigger is power and not party, one assumes new Labour are at it too) are off licking boots and submitting to the whip in between division bells. She even suggests that elements of masochism could be used to spice up jaded sexual palates and so be a useful tool in preserving the institution of marriage — the family that flays together stays together.

The problem with this vision is not that Phillips fails to make it convincing — far from it, her description of the way a masochistic fantasy plays out is both

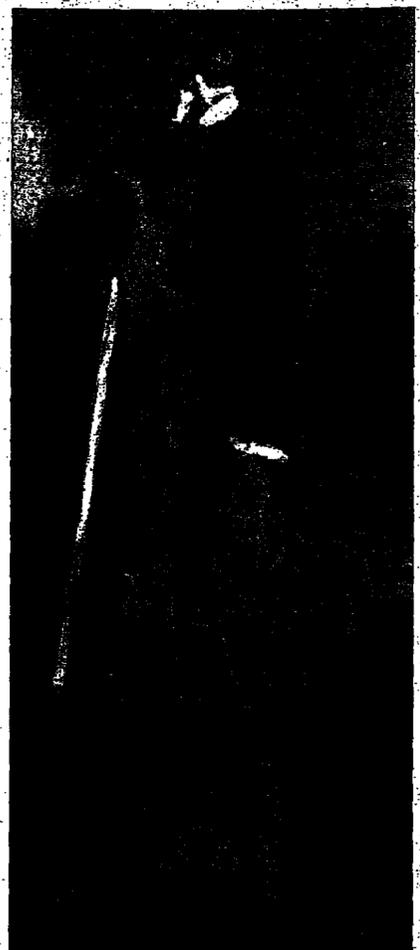


An argument that's bound to please masochism made mainstream

One of the first to cause a sensation

Beardsley's louche manner belied his hard work, says Ian McIntyre

The Darnest Hirst of his generation? He was certainly controversial. "A combination of English rowdiness with French lubricity," pronounced *The Times* when *The Yellow Book* first appeared. In our day, a Beardsley exhibition at the V&A in 1966 attracted large crowds; it included his *Lysistrata* drawings, but when reproductions went on sale the police seized them as indecent. Beardsley's family background — leaving aside the possibility that he was a Bengali octaroon — was not notably exotic. He grew up in Brighton. His father's principal claim to attention, Sturgis writes, were "a luxuriant moustache and a private income", although he also had the distinction of being sued for breach of promise during his honeymoon by the widow of a clergyman. Beardsley the dandy, Beardsley the poseur, Beardsley the exhibitionist was his mother's son: vivacious and vain, daring and mischievous, she once pre-



Elegant: Walter Sickert's 1894 portrait of Beardsley from *Aubrey Beardsley* (V&A Publications, £25)

AUBREY BEARDSLEY
A Biography
By Matthew Sturgis
HarperCollins, £19.99
ISBN 0 00 235799 4

tended to be a deaf-mute in order to secure a reserved pew at the front of a crowded church.

His formal art training was confined to night classes. He worked briefly in a surveyor's office and then for Guardian Fire and Life Assurance. His own life would have been difficult to insure, because tuberculosis had been diagnosed when he was seven, and he always accepted that his life would be short. Depression at his condition, however, he regarded as "next door to the criminal". "I expected I should make an 'Al Fresco' croak of it," he announced after one severe haemorrhage.

An invitation from Dent to illustrate the *Morte Darthur* released him from Fire and Life. There followed a commission for ten drawings for Wilde's *Salome*. Wilde, then in his late 30s, rewarded him with an inscribed copy of the French edition: "For Aubrey, the only artist who, besides myself, knows what the dance of the seven veils is..."

Wilde later became jealous of the younger man's success (although there was some provocation — Beardsley had caricatured him in the *Salome* illustrations). "Dear Aubrey is

too Parisian," he sneered; "he cannot forget he has been to Dieppe — once." But Beardsley was formidably well-read in French literature. During one of his convalescences he attacked the sermons — in six volumes — of the 17th-century Jesuit priest Bourdaloue. French painters were an important influence, too — not

just his Impressionist or Symbolist near-contemporaries, but 18th-century figures such as Fragonard and Watteau. Burne-Jones gave him early and generous encouragement, but his admiration for Whistler steered him away from total immersion in the lushness of the Pre-Raphaelites. Eclecticism did nothing to

blur the distinctiveness of his own work. The only label he would ever accept was "Realist". "I fear people appear differently to me than they do to others," he told a newspaper interviewer. "To me they are mostly grotesque, and I represent them as I see them."

One of his afflictions was to seem always to be at leisure, but he could apply himself with ferocious intensity, and in six short years of professional life achieved more than many artists granted three times his span. "For all his pose of idleness," Sturgis writes, "Beardsley was constantly at work with his eyes." He quotes his friend Max Beerbaum: "No man ever saw more."

Sturgis has an elegant, agreeably astringent style. He traces the brief trajectory of Beardsley's life with sympathy and clarity — the instant celebrity generated by *The Yellow Book*, the disastrous impact of the Wilde scandal, his late conversion to Catholicism, the poignant appeal to his publisher from his deathbed to destroy all obscene material: "Jesus is our Lord and Judge. Dear Friend, I implore you to destroy all copies of *Lysistrata* and bad drawings..."

A young poet called Douglas Alastair who visited Beardsley towards the end said that his wit was as sharp as ever and that he rapped out his anecdotes "like a prince throwing down golden ducats". Sturgis might perhaps have illustrated that wit more fully than he does by drawing on the many letters that survive from those last years.

Beardsley's posthumous influence was substantial. He was important to Charles Rennie Mackintosh and to the evolution of Art Nouveau. A year before he died he met Diaghilev in Dieppe and Sturgis detects a flavour of his work in some of Bakst's early designs for the Ballets Russes. His drawings were known in their student days to Klee, Kandinsky, Picasso and Matisse, and Sturgis sees their move towards abstraction as a continuation of Beardsley's stylistic innovations.

I think Sturgis goes slightly astray in dating the revival of interest in Beardsley as late as the 1960s. Certainly if he had been able to inspect the bookshelves of Mark Bowden and some of his Cambridge friends ten years earlier, he would have discovered more than one set of *The Yellow Book*, and I do not imagine things were much different in the Oxford of the purple-suited Kenneth Tynan.

History in the make-believe

Russell Celyn Jones

THE LAST KING OF SCOTLAND

By Giles Foden

Faber, £9.99

ISBN 0 571 17016 9

The jacket blurb on Giles Foden's first novel claims this is a fiction "based closely on historical events" in Idi Amin's Uganda. On the face of it that may seem an oxymoron, but there are good precedents: Mailler's *Armies of the Night*, Capote's *In Cold Blood*, Balzac's *Every Man for Himself*. The risk an author runs with such fiction is if he relies too heavily on history to propel the narrative. Imagination gets shackled to fact and, of course, one knows how the story ends. Foden avoids most of these pitfalls in *The Last King of Scotland* by telling the story through a doctor, Nicholas Garrigan, who becomes Idi Amin's personal physician, a relationship that is purely fictional.

What has been said of Richard Nixon could be said of Idi Amin: that you could never have invented him. Foden has not so much invented, or reinvented Amin, who was larger than life anyway, as embellished on the grotesque caricature. As a work of reconstruction it compares favourably with Ryszard Kapuscinski's evocation of Haile Selassie in his novel *The Emperor*.

Amin is given masses to say in a seductively idiosyncratic style, and it is wholly believable that Garrigan falls under his spell. A fax Amin sends to

President Nyerere of Tanzania is pretty typical of the awkward solicitude he shows towards his doctor: "I want to assure you that I love you and if you were a woman I would have considered marrying you, although your head is full of grey hairs, but as you are a man, that possibly doesn't arise." He's crazy as a loon too: "You know that whites are exploding all the time nowadays... and nobody knows why."

There are numerous other characters — duplicitous and sycophantic British Embassy officials; pilots, doctors and patients — yet none of them affects the narrator as much as Amin, or the country itself. Even seductive women fail to elicit more than elliptical responses from him: "God I was awkward, awkward cur that I was." That these characters do not survive the duration of the book is perhaps aesthetically justified. Only Amin himself goes to

the very last page with Garrigan.

Foden's descriptions of the Ugandan topography and the minutiae of African society, breathtaking though they are, occasionally go on too long, veering away from the heart of the story. They are too objective to reveal any transferred character emotion and reduce Garrigan to a *flâneur* in his own travel book. Yet these longeurs are never intrinsically dull and this is the kind of flaw that is actually quite encouraging in a first novel, because it shows an author wrestling with his ambition.

The narrative picks up momentum when Garrigan witnesses first-hand Amin's campaign of torture. Thereafter he feels complicit the longer he stays as his physician. But any attempts he makes to escape the country are thwarted. Amin seems to have eyes and ears everywhere. When Garrigan finally makes it back to Britain (this account is written from a cottage in Scotland), the sense of his displacement on home soil is strikingly well done.

Taking fiction into such territory as this is to be applauded. *The Last King of Scotland* is an auspicious debut that bodes well for Foden's future work.

Russell Celyn Jones's novel *The Erus Hunter* is published by Abacus, priced £9.99.

Legacy of Conrad and Kool-aid

David Dabydeen

MY FATHER'S HOUSE

By Matthew Carr

Hamish Hamilton, £16.99

ISBN 0 241 13748 9

BILL OF RIGHTS

By Fred D'Aguiar

Chano, £7.99

ISBN 0 7011 6525 1

BILL CARR was a failed Cambridge PhD student who emigrated to Guyana in the 1960s to take up a Lectureship in English. He published next to nothing, writing intermittent verse, and was remembered by his family only by his alcoholic rages, his wife-beating, his abandonment of his children. A sad, wasted and self-destructive figure, underserving of obituary? Possibly. But his circumstances transformed him from an ill-mannered Englishman into a freedom fighter and hero of a Third World country: a transformation that is properly the stuff of fiction.

The former British colony of Guyana has seen the advent of mad or ambitious or eccentric Englishmen in search of some peculiar destiny. Sir Walter Raleigh first and foremost,

who thought he had found El Dorado. Bill Carr went to Guyana to escape failure and to start afresh in El Dorado among a newly independent people.

Three decades later, soon after his death, Matthew Carr, his elder son, tormented by the memories of his father's violence, goes in search of him. It is as much a fictional as a filial journey. Bill Carr's life was imitative of the expatriate drunkenness of Hemingway and Lowry, the bluff and fleshly indulgence of Falstaff.

In a sense Guyana was a perfect setting for Carr's dramatisation of self, for it was a space made by English literature. Elizabethan texts described it as Utopia; in modern times, Conan Doyle and W. H. Hudson set their novels there to evoke exotic

and mythical landscapes. Perhaps not surprisingly, the Booker Prize is funded by a British company which, up to the 1960s, dominated Guyana's economy. Carr's life touched upon the main texts of Empire, for in his loneliness he is Robinson Crusoe, in his tortured idealism Conrad's Kurtz, in his quest for self-aggrandisement a hero from a Henry novel.

Expecting to find in Guyana a more banal story, the son discovers instead a man who has passed into Third World folklore, revered for his defence of Guyanese civil rights and his opposition to neo-colonial tyranny; a man who had turned himself into a sacrificial lamb, allowing himself to be beaten for being white, for the sake of Guyana's freedom; a man who had

sacrificed his wife and children because they were white, to "go native", so as to expiate colonial guilt.

Bill Carr embodied all the idealism and sickness of the colonial mind and his son's narrative is a monumental



Before the massacre. Jim Jones with his followers in 1978

exploration of the paradoxes of Empire. It is written as if from the pen of a novelist, superbly plotted with a marvellous sense of the intricacies of character and a panoramic view of British and colonial history. Matthew Carr has

made astonishing art of his father's wreckage. Another recent white adventure to Guyana's shores, one infinitely more deadly and self-destructive, was the American Jim Jones, who in the 1970s cleared a space in the rainforests to set up his Utopia. The quest for destiny ended in the largest mass suicide in modern history, a monument to death involving nearly a thousand Americans. Fred D'Aguiar's long poem goes in search of Jim Jones, using as its guiding text Wilson Harris's *Palace of the Peacock*, a brilliant novel by Guyana's foremost writer which was in itself a revisioning of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

Like Matthew Carr, D'Aguiar locates Guyana in a pattern of literary references, but draws on an array of popular sources, proverbs, balladry and nursery rhymes.

The result is a cacophony of noises which seek to reflect the breakdown of Jonestown. The language refuses "sweet airs that give delight" for a starkness and vulgarity appropriate to the subject. Jones has debased the gold of El Dorado to "fucky fuck" and "cum" and "quiff". Guyana has become a place where "a curse is as good as a song". The combination of Calibanesque obscenity, slapstick humour, throw-away lines, childish jingles and barroom witicism is as bizarre and potent concoction as the Kool-aid and cyanide which the cultists drank.

D'Aguiar is restlessly and manically inventive in spinning his shroud for the thousand corpses — marvelous spider and storyteller, making anti-art of human remains. What remains of all the wreckage is a failure of art and the poet's suicidal refusal of the embellishments of language.

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Modern miracle: reconstruction of Trajan's vanished Forum

Before Count Dracula usurped his place, Decebalus was Transylvania's top criminal hero. At the end of the 1st century AD, the serious, nationalist was those on the shoreline of the Mediterranean. Decebalus ruled a landlocked Danubian mountain country and transformed it by means of goldmines, whose product he banked in vaults under river beds; Greek and Latin literature, whose lessons he allowed in carefully controlled doses; and by human sacrifice, enforced by female torturers. The Count would have been proud of him.

Derek Williams compares Decebalus to Saddam Hussein. The Transylvanian monarch was certainly as mendacious as Saddam, as prepared to tweak the nose of the world's greatest empire, as financially able to buy foreign military technology and as skilful at turning it back against its creators. And like Saddam's Iraq, Decebalus's state, which the Romans called Dacia, was a real threat, closer to the superpower's strategic interests than the superpower liked to think.

Until Trajan became the first non-Italian ruler of the Roman

Empire in AD 98, Decebalus was reasonably safe in cowing his neighbours from behind well-stocked mountain fortresses. Only a massive concentrated assault by the new Emperor, and the abandonment of lesser imperial targets, such as Scotland, succeeded in bringing the ancestors of the vampires' land to heel. Once the job was done in AD 107, however, the flow of gold to Rome was like the future flood from the new world to the old.

Trajan was a man who liked buildings, particularly buildings named after himself. So keen was he to see his name stuck to walls that he earned the nickname "Ivy". The defeat of the Dacians left him free to spend, spend, spend, on a Trajan's market, a Trajan's library, a Trajan's forum and a massive state office building. The final result, Trajan's Forum, was described by Rome's last great historian, Ammianus Marcellinus, as "a construction unique under the heavens".

The only well-known relic that survives from this gold-rush glorification is Trajan's Column, which now sits sadly among the car-parks of Rome, shrouded in plastic like our own Albert Memorial.

ROMANS AND BARBARIANS
By Derek Williams
Constable, £25
ISBN 0 09 47900 2

THE FORUM OF TRAJAN IN ROME
By James E. Packer
University of California Press, £40
ISBN 0 520 07403 9

This was originally designed as a marker-stick to show the 120ft depth of rock that the engineers had cut into the Quirinal Hill to make room for the Forum. But someone had the idea of carving the cinematic story of the wars in which Decebalus had been defeated. Today, when the Emperor's rock-digging feat does not seem so remarkable, this ancient war movie — starring 2,500 human figures in 150 episodes — still has the power to move the emotions.

But the column badly needs an interpreter. It has lost not only its colour and its surrounding points for a proper view, but also all those original military admirers who would have understood its lessons. Even when it was first put together

— in an act like hanging a Bayeux tapestry around a telegraph pole — it would have been hard to see without suffering a stiff neck. Today, it is in sore need of Williams's elegant and entertaining guide to its mysteries.

This book falls into three parts, of which Trajan's Dacian campaign is the third. The aim of the author, who modestly describes his work as offering from his earlier book *The Reach of Rome*, is to bridge the gap between those who study Roman history and those who concentrate on the barbarian world. With lightly worn learning and elegant literary style, he sets out how each side influenced the mind of the other.

The section on Ovid's exile to the Black Sea is a masterly recreation of both the terror and human tenderness which Romans might find at the edges of their Empire. The story of Varus's defeat by German tribes, the first great psychological setback for imperial expansion, is a useful companion to Simon Schama's dramatic cultural account in his 1995 book, *Landscape and Memory*.

Neither Williams nor Schama, however, can tell us precisely what Trajan did with his Dacian treat-

sure. For that, a certain amount of modern wealth is required. At a price of £40 the University of California has produced a minute analysis of the Forum, applying computer methods to marble fragments and medieval plans, making one of those books that takes publishing and scholarship back to their most glorious days.

For 800 years after Trajan's dust was consigned to the base of his column, the Forum survived — despite borrowings from Eastern emperors, Arab plunderers and the souvenir hunters of Rome. For a further 900 years it slowly collapsed, sometimes through earthquakes, sometimes through the efforts of church-decorating artists, including Michelangelo, but mostly through property dealings and benign neglect.

The full architectural story of this rise and fall is set out by James E. Packer in three volumes of reconstruction, historical paintings and maps. If anyone were to want to rebuild Trajan's memorial to his triumph, this would be enough of a guide to make a good attempt. The oil riches of Iraq would be useful too.

Our mutual friend the felon

Poverty, despair and degradation: Nick Davies looks at what has changed in the criminal world

What has happened to criminal skill? How is it that the pavements of Victorian London seethed with pickpockets and con men, variously feigning fits and forging wills, whereas now we have only beggars and muggers to contend with? Is there a capable cat burglar anywhere in the country? Or a cracksmen, able to finger his way through Mr Chubb's most subtle defences? And when was the last time anyone came across a dredgerman trawling his net through the Thames in search of a valuable corpse, or a cardsharp, with his fingertips skinned to decipher the pinpricks on the back of his pack?

The answer, I think, is revealing not only of the character of crime but also of the character of the poverty which lies behind it, and it points to a profound difference between the Victorian underworld that Donald Thomas describes and the contemporary underworld of the "socially excluded" who have become the object of such great political anxiety.

Thomas's world — which he describes with vivid colour and great relish — is a place created and formed by extreme material hardship, a place where a man might reasonably conclude that his best chance of surviving is, for example, to wade waist-deep through offal and excrement in the sewers beneath the streets, searching for treasure without succumbing to poisonous gases and sudden floods. The skill is borne of desperation.

More than that, the skill is shared, passed from one hand to another in the fetid intimacy of the rookery slums, embellished as each new obstacle devised by the opposition in-

spires a new technique. (Thomas reproduces a late Victorian diagram of a safe-breaker's kit, a state-of-the-art collection of precision drills, cleavers, jemmys and prisers). The contemporary poor, on the other hand, suffer a different kind of hardship. Its origins are certainly material — hugely increased by the unemployment and welfare cuts of the 1980s — but the hardship is not so deep and the character of their despair is different.

There is a world formed by a conspiracy of circumstance: by addiction to crack cocaine and heroin and speed; by the blackmarket in drugs, which is the most important economic fact of their lives and which offers far more treasure than any tosher's sewer and far more dangers; by images of wealth pumped into television in every broken home; by the release of the mentally ill into their midst; by gangs and gangs. The damage here is not merely material, but emotional and social and spiritual, too. Those who survive do so, not with subtlety and skill, but with ruthless selfishness.

They live in communities which have been shattered, first by squalor and then by the sale of council houses. The outcome is a generation who have no role models — lawful or criminal — and no one from whom to learn the old skills of the street. But more than that, this is a generation which is depressed and alienated and bitter, not merely relying on violence instead of skill, but relishing it. This is not to romanticise their Victorian forbears, who were certainly ruthless — just think of Kate Webster who not only murdered her mistress for the sake of her jewels, but disembowelled her corpse, boiled and boned the flesh,



Murder kept at a safe and comfortable distance: leading a "Jack the Ripper tour" in the East End of London

and then sold the body fats for dripping — but it is to recognise that whereas the material hardship of the last century might be tackled by the welfare state, begun by the Liberals in 1906, contemporary poverty is a far more complex and difficult enemy.

Nick Davies is the author of *Dark Hearts: The Shocking Truth about Hidden Britain*, published by Chatto & Windus, £16.99.

Not only the fruit

LUCY ELLMANN is a romantic. This you can tell, before reading a word of her latest novel, *Man or Mango?*, from the dedication to her daughter, Emily Firefly Gasquoine. You do not call your daughter Firefly without a bold, wayward, fantastical streak (not to mention an interest in the glamorous end of the insect world). All these qualities are exhibited in *Man or Mango?*, deployed with an intensity and concentration that make one sometimes turn one's face away

Jane Shilling

MAN OR MANGO?

By Lucy Ellmann
Headline, £14.99
ISBN 0 7472 2114 6

from the text as though from a tirade. Ellmann has also, fortunately, a fierce sense of humour.

What is her novel about? Well, it is about annihilation, and lists, and loss and love. It is about the acts of writing, and of disappearance, and whether by bringing them together — codifying the absence of something, fixing it in words, one can somehow restore its existence. Ellmann's book is so anarchic, and so finely balanced, that to analyse it is to risk dusting off its bloom with coarse critic's fingers. Still, here goes.

Her heroine, Eloise, lives alone, in a dinky country cottage, bought with a legacy from her father, who collected ornamental bones. The cottage is full of them. She does not work, having just enough money to get by without. She is not loved, by herself or anyone else. She avoids contact of all kinds, and makes lists of damaging encounters and their recovery times: "Speaking to postman, half an hour. Unavoidable chat with neighbour, two hours." She suffers from minor ailments, anxiety and a lack of hope. She has been celibate for six years. You would say that she was dangerously depressed were her insight into her own condition not so accurate and acerbic.

George, whose chapters alternate with those of Eloise, is American. He is a scriptwriter, who has come to England to finish his epic poem about ice hockey, and complete a screenplay for the BBC. He and Eloise once had an encounter from which they both emerged bruised. George wonders whether to call Eloise.

Slowly, via infinite digressions that remind one of Sterne, or Montaigne, in the inconsequential precision with which they pin out the oddity of human nature, Eloise and George converge on a Cornemara hotel, where a murder weekend is in progress. They meet again. Are swept away, one way and another, by passion. There are three appendices: a report from this newspaper about the unclaimed assets of Holocaust victims lying in Swiss bank vaults; a list of the worst disasters in the British Isles; and the *Lord High Executioner's Song* from *The Mikado*. It is a very odd book. But wonderful. I shall read it again, when I can bear to.



Ellmann: ferocity and a sense of humour

THE LATEST boomlet in British film production, from *Four Weddings and a Funeral* to *The Full Monty*, has made little reference to the last great British film assault upon the world 50 years ago. Even Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*, which flagrantly begged comparison with Laurence Olivier's 1944 classic, was perceived as original. Nowadays, it seems, no one much remembers the triumphs of British cinema's golden age.

It was indignation at such ignorance that caused Charles Drazin to write this book, a string of micro-biographies of the major players from the wartime and immediate post-war years when Britain, cursed and blessed with the same language as the Americans, tried in vain to assault the American market. Drazin is right to be depressed about the British reluctance to celebrate its own cinematic past and fingers the British film and fingers the British film more interested in every other country's films than our own. The result is that young British film buffs today know everything about Quentin Tarantino, David Lynch and Martin Scorsese and next to nothing about David Lean, Alexander Korda, Humphrey Jennings and Alberto Caval-

True glory of Britain

Nicholas Wapshott

THE FINEST YEARS
British Cinema of the 1940s

By Charles Drazin
Andre Deutsch, £17.99
ISBN 0 233 98285 4

There is an irony here, for Scorsese not only grew up with a passion for British films, which as a child he sneaked out of bed to watch while his parents slept, but his dissertation at the New York Film School was devoted to the films of Carol Reed, perhaps Britain's greatest director who did not leave for Hollywood. The final credits of Scorsese's *The Last Waltz* play out to the incidental theme from Reed's *The Third Man*. What Drazin reveals most clearly is that the young Scorsese was almost alone in

America. Even had British films in the Forties been distributed properly, instead of being hawked around small independents, their very intelligence counted against them. Compared to the Hollywood product they were uncommercial and puzzling. Their influence has been through American film-makers of a subsequent generation. That young British directors have only a passing interest in their predecessors is a scandal which Drazin's campaign may do something to address.

This, then, is a book that should never have had to be written, and Drazin aims at a rather empty field between those who know and care nothing about British film-makers of the Forties and those who will find most of what he has to report too familiar. The motivation for the book, too, has its pitfalls. He is so irritated that the only veteran British director celebrated today is Michael Powell (and his fellow Archer-Emeric Pressburger) that the great man is largely ignored in favour of his arch-enemy John Davis, the bullying philistine from Rank who presided over so many of the wretched British films which have given our industry such a bad name.

Trouble with too much talk

One of the 20th century's most important facts is that the British Commonwealth and Empire went to war against Hitler almost unitedly in 1939, and stayed in the struggle — expanded by the end of 1941 into a second world war — until total victory was achieved. The war would never have been won, of course, without the vast contributions of the Soviet Union and the United States. But it has to be said that neither of those great powers entered the war voluntarily; they had been dragged in by force.

By contrast, the autonomous countries of the Commonwealth, with the sole exception of the Irish Free State (a Commonwealth member until 1949), all chose to enter the war alongside Britain when Hitler invaded Poland, despite their remoteness from Europe and the very large sacrifices they made in the previous war.

In the course of the war five million (round figures) from Commonwealth and Empire countries served in the armed forces, compared with six million from Britain; of whom 170,000 and 260,000 respectively lost their lives. Without our loyal and enlightened partners we should indeed have been standing alone in 1940.

What the Commonwealth as a whole did in the Second World War is, therefore, a subject long overdue for a good book. Sadly, Christopher Somerville's does not fill the bill. There is no adequate record or assessment of cam-

paigns, and vital joint enterprises, such as the air training scheme, are not mentioned at all. Commonwealth leaders are barely described, and altogether the political side of the Commonwealth at war receives very slight attention. There is no systematic identification of major units, or where they served; no list (which would have been interesting) of gallantry awards. One could go on.

The author relies mainly upon interviews with veterans in some, though by no means all, Commonwealth countries. Even if the representation were full and fair, such oral evidence long after the event is notoriously unreliable. Somerville's veterans are quoted so insistently, and at such length, that they more or less take over the book.

Yet there are some gems. Mahinder Singh Pujji, DFC, was a young Sikh who arrived at the height of the Battle of Britain but had to wait six months before he could fly a Hurricane. Meanwhile he observed the reaction of Londoners to himself and to the Blitz: "I personally appreciated the spirit of the Londoners. When we would meet them they were very friendly; and they were very courageous. If you would go to cinema and there was an air raid, then on the screen will come a notice saying: 'There is an air raid. Anyone who wishes to leave, there is a shelter. Please leave quietly.' I found no one would leave. It really fascinated me..."

Today trains can be stopped, stations closed and city centres paralysed by a warning from a terrorist, which may be a hoax.

John Grigg

OUR WAR

How the British Commonwealth Fought the Second World War

By Christopher Somerville

Waldenfield & Nicolson, £25

ISBN 0 297 81668 3

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Bargains of the week: Mother's Day in the Cotswolds; a cruise for Easter; California before May Day



A selection of last-minute holidays and travel opportunities at home, on the Continent and further afield, many at bargain prices.

BRITAIN

MOTHERS DAY at the home of the Pudding Club is the idea of Sunvil UK, which is offering a two-night, half-board break for £125 at the Cotswolds hotel which prides itself on its puddings and where a club meets every fortnight to celebrate them. Stay from Friday, March 20. Details: 0181-232 9788.

MAYFAIR for a night for £65 in a four-star hotel with breakfast is available at weekends until the end of this month from the Hotel Directory. Details: 0181-770 0123.

COME SNOW or sunshine, the Yorkshire Dales, Harrogate and York should still look

marvellous on a four-day coach tour leaving the Gloucester area on March 26. The Beavis Holidays trip, which includes half-board and a tour of Holmfirth, costs from £190. Details: 01453 382297.

EASTER holiday breaks in coastal and rural properties are still available from Farm and Cottage Holidays. A week in a farm cottage sleeping six in north Cornwall costs £242, including bottle-feeding the lambs. Details: 01237 479698.

A QUIET Easter without the children while they go quad-biking, abseiling and dragon-boatting will sound perfect to some parents — but the privilege of making it a reality will cost them £245, the price of sending a seven to 16-year-old to Superchoice's Easter Camp at Osmington Bay, Dorset, for a week from April 11. Details: 01273 691100.

WALKING and activity holidays based at an 18th-century inn in the Ceirg Valley near Llangollen are on offer after Easter from Countywide. Three-night breaks cost £165 and four nights are £215, including breakfast, dinner and picnic lunches. Details: 0161-446 2226.

EUROPE

SEVEN NIGHTS' self-catering in Salzburg, the enchanting city of Mozart and baroque architecture, are available from Page & Moy for £109. Flight leaves Gatwick on March 21. Details: 0116-250 7116.

CYPRUS at a £90 saving is among the best offers from Sunset Holidays if you are ready to travel next Wednesday. A fortnight's B&B at a Paphos hotel will cost £299, including return flight from Manchester. Details: 01204 434343.

CHAMONIX, beneath Mont Blanc, offers spectacular skiing for all abilities plus activities ranging from curling to riding for non-skiers, and is available from March 22 for a week with Ski Esprit. Chalet accommodation with half-board and return flights cost from £398, with child reductions. Details: 01252 616789.

THE Davy Crockett Ranch at Disneyland Paris is more peaceful than it sounds, set amid trees at a safe distance from the park. It has a wonderful pool and is still

available at Easter from Eurocamp. A two-night break in a log cabin will cost two adults and up to four children £369 from April 9, including ferry crossing. Details: 01565 626262.

DUBLIN is one of the most popular European cities for short breaks and, until Easter, Irish Ferries is offering return sailings between Friday and Tuesday from £126 for a car and up to five passengers. Details: 0990 171717.

THE Easter Caravan is the name of a ten-day trip with Festival Cruises around the Mediterranean from Italy to Israel via Rhodes and Aegean ports. It is available at a 15 per cent discount, sails on April 4 and costs from £930, including flights from London. Details: 0171-436 0827.

AN INDULGENT five-night progress through Tuscany's landscape of castles and gentle hills, sampling Italian wines, is offered by Arblaster & Clarke Wine Tours from May 18. The tour includes BA flights, four-star accommodation, six meals with wine, tastings and visits with an expert, and costs £999. Details: 01730 893344.



This Goa beggar is one of Daniel Welldon's travel photographs being exhibited at the Groucho Club in Soho. If you want to see Goa in person, you can go with Unifet for £299, which includes a fortnight's B&B at a resort hotel and a flight from Gatwick on March 21. Details: 0990 336336

SOUTH AFRICA for a week for less than £400 including car hire seems a tremendous deal, but act fast. Book with SARtravel before Tuesday for flights from Heathrow between April 12 and May 31. Prices start from £393. Details: 0171-267 1133.

THE GAMBIA is available on a fortnight's Thomson holiday for £379, with half-board and a flight from Gatwick on Tuesday. Details from Lunn Poly Holiday Shops.

ADVANTAGE Travel Centres are offering a week's skiing in Whistler, Canada, from £729 (a £180 saving) based on four sharing a two-bedroom apartment. Flights are included and available from Heathrow, Manchester and Glasgow, but must be taken before March 28. Details: 0870 909070.

NILE CRUISES are back on the market and three nights on the river, three in a hotel and two on a train are included in The Imaginative Traveller's nine-day Nile Safari leaving Heathrow on April 1. The trip takes in Luxor tem-

ples, the West Bank and costs £670 with half-board. Details: 0181-742 8612.

HILLTRIBE Escape is the name of the Travelbag Adventures 11-day trip to Thailand, which includes forest treks and sampling village life after very contrasting nights in Bangkok and Chiang Mai. The tour, leaving Heathrow on April 4, costs from £895. Details: 01420 541007.

CALIFORNIA flights are available for £229 return plus £54 tax from Gatwick between April 18 and May 1 with Bon Voyage. The trip must include a Saturday night and be completed within 30 days. Details: 0800 987089.

All prices are per person and based on two sharing a room, unless otherwise stated.

See The Times on Saturday for more flight bargains and late holidays

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RACING: HOURIGAN'S CHARGE LEAVES ILLNESS BEHIND IN SEARCH FOR CHASING'S GREATEST PRIZE

Dorans Pride on recovery mission

GET well cards hang on Michael Hourigan's office wall in Co. Limerick...

Recovery prompted one Dublin schoolgirl to send her congratulations to Dorans Pride...

"I never thought I would have a horse that would make people write," he said...

Hourigan remembers driving the stricken Dorans Pride 100 miles to the Curragh veterinary hospital...

Since beginning his chasing career, Dorans Pride has been beaten just three times...

"When he fell at Thurles last year, it was a serious fall and he missed 11 days because of it..."

over jumps was Hourigan's riding tally, and when he began training in 1973 his prospects looked bleak.

"That start was from a small yard behind his parents' pub, and he had to wait four years for his first winner..."

"After he won his first two races, we were offered a lot of money, but Tom (Doran), the London-based builder just said 'I didn't buy this horse to sell him'..."

It is an attitude born two years ago out of still having his horse to train...

Cheltenham Gold Cup winner.

During that rise, the selling of promising young horses, including from the point-to-point field, was vital to make ends meet...

"After he won his first two races, we were offered a lot of money, but Tom (Doran), the London-based builder just said 'I didn't buy this horse to sell him'..."

It is an attitude born two years ago out of still having his horse to train...

Cheltenham Gold Cup winner.



Dorans Pride carries Irish hopes in the Cheltenham Gold Cup a week today

Henderson rules Sharpical out of Champion

BY OUR RACING STAFF

SHARPICAL will miss the Smurfit Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham next Tuesday, his trainer, Nicky Henderson, said yesterday.

"We'll keep him ticking over and it is perfectly possible he will go either to Aintree or for the Scottish Champion Hurdle at Ayr."

The six-year-old came to prominence in the Champion Hurdle betting after an impressive success in the Tote Gold Trophy at Newbury last month...

After an encouraging re-appearance when a five-length second to One Man in Ascot's Comet Chase last month, Strong Promise was beaten by Go Ballistic when odds-on at Wincanton two weeks later...

out of his Wincanton race well and this gallop was his last serious piece of work before the Gold Cup, Kinane added.

The Grey Monk takes another step on the Gold Cup trail tomorrow, Gordon Richards, his trainer, will give him a second racecourse gallop between races at Ayr...

Space Trucker warmed up for the Guinness Arkle Chase next Tuesday with a workout under Williamson, his big-race jockey, at the Curragh yesterday...

"Space Trucker jumped well," she said, "a little drier ground would help but at least it's the first race on the chase course and we should have the best of the going."

Space Trucker, third in the Champion Hurdle last year, is quoted at 14-1 for the Arkle by Ladbrokes. However, Coral yesterday reported laying Space Trucker to lose 'over £70,000' and cut the 'odds' of the price from 16-1 to 12-1.

Racing results table for 2.20 Sol Music, 2.50 Vitaman, 3.20 Linton Rocks, 3.50 DINES (nap), 4.20 Young Sam, 4.50 Rambling Ben, 5.20 Iainus.

Racing results table for 1.11-1.45 GOOD TIMES 13 (P.F.), 1.11-1.45 GOOD TIMES 13 (P.F.), 1.11-1.45 GOOD TIMES 13 (P.F.)

Racing results table for 2.20 SEAVINGTON MAIDEN HURDLE (Div II: £1,800; 2m) (18 runners)

Racing results table for 2.50 BROADSTONE NOVICES CHASE (€3,600; 2m 5f) (6 runners)

Racing results table for 3.20 WINCANTON LOGISTICS HANDICAP CHASE (€5,638; 2m 5f) (10 runners)

Racing results table for 3.50 SEAVINGTON MAIDEN HURDLE (Div II: £1,800; 2m) (18 runners)

Racing results table for 4.20 WINCANTON LOGISTICS HANDICAP CHASE (€5,638; 2m 5f) (10 runners)

Racing results table for 4.50 SEAVINGTON MAIDEN HURDLE (Div II: £1,800; 2m) (18 runners)

Racing results table for 5.20 WINCANTON LOGISTICS HANDICAP CHASE (€5,638; 2m 5f) (10 runners)

Racing results table for 3.50 TOMMY WALLIS HANDICAP HURDLE (€3,474; 2m) (7 runners)

Racing results table for 4.20 DICK WOODHOUSE HUNTERS CHASE (Amateurs: £1,400; 3m 11f) (5 runners)

Racing results table for 4.50 SPARKFOOT HANDICAP HURDLE (€2,248; 2m 6f) (20 runners)

Racing results table for 5.20 SEAVINGTON MAIDEN HURDLE (Div II: £1,800; 2m) (18 runners)

Racing results table for 5.50 WINCANTON LOGISTICS HANDICAP CHASE (€5,638; 2m 5f) (10 runners)

Racing results table for 6.20 SEAVINGTON MAIDEN HURDLE (Div II: £1,800; 2m) (18 runners)

Racing results table for 6.50 WINCANTON LOGISTICS HANDICAP CHASE (€5,638; 2m 5f) (10 runners)

Racing results table for 7.20 SEAVINGTON MAIDEN HURDLE (Div II: £1,800; 2m) (18 runners)

Racing results table for 7.50 WINCANTON LOGISTICS HANDICAP CHASE (€5,638; 2m 5f) (10 runners)

Racing results table for 8.20 SEAVINGTON MAIDEN HURDLE (Div II: £1,800; 2m) (18 runners)

Racing results table for YESTERDAY'S RESULTS, Bangor

Racing results table for COURSE SPECIALISTS

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Racing results table for 3.30 EDINBURGH WOOLLEN MILL NOVICES CHASE (€3,438; 2m 4f) (10f) (6)

Racing results table for 4.00 WAVER CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (€2,430; 2m 11f) (10)

Racing results table for 4.30 GOLDEN PHEASANT YOUNGERS HANDICAP CHASE (€3,438; 2m 4f) (6)

Racing results table for 5.00 LODGE WATER INTERMEDIATE OPEN NATIONAL HUNT RACE (€1,245; 2m 11f) (8)

Racing results table for 3.10 ROYAL MAIL HANDICAP HURDLE (€2,880; 2m) (8)

Racing results table for 3.40 HOUGHTON CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS NOVICES HANDICAP HURDLE (€2,530; 3m) (17 runners)

Racing results table for 2.40 JOHN WEBBER MEMORIAL NOVICES CHASE (€2,236; 2m 6f) (11)

Racing results table for 4.40 BRIGHTON HUNTERS CHASE (Amateurs: £1,501; 3m 11f) (5)

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RACELINE 0930 168+1, CARLISLE WINCANTON TOWCESTER IRISH FULL RESULTS SERVICE 108

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British No 2 shows lack of self-belief in fifth first-round exit of 1998

Black year continues for Henman

FROM ALIX RAMSAY IN INDIAN WELLS, CALIFORNIA

"There's no magic secret, is there?" So said Tim Henman after his 6-3, 6-4 defeat at the hands of Wayne Black in the first round of the Newsweek Champions Cup here on Tuesday night. It was another miserable day in what is turning into a miserable year for the British No 2.

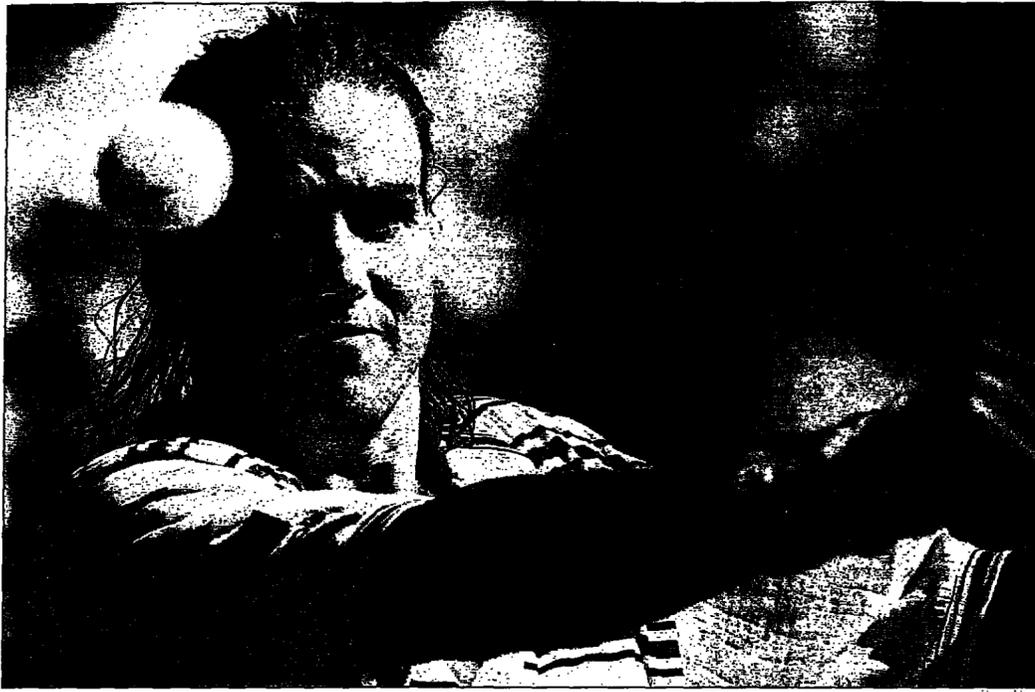
To compound the misery, had Henman won, he would have faced Nicolas Pietrangeli, a lucky loser, who was drafted into the main draw late on Tuesday, when Michael Chang had to pull out with a knee injury. The only good thing to take from the whole experience is that Henman's ranking is unlikely to suffer. Last year he was forced to withdraw with an elbow injury here, leaving him with no points to defend this week.

Henman's continuing slump is still a considerable cause for concern but the player himself is not too worried at present. "I'm the first to admit I'm struggling a bit, but I'm not going to hit any panic buttons," he said. "I'll just keep working at my game. I will come out the other side."

Henman has now lost in the first round of five tournaments in 1998. Against Black, the world No 79, he was all at sea. Black had come off the back of the qualifying competition and, with a few wins under his belt, was in the habit of playing the right point at the right time.

It has been a long time since Henman has felt that confident. "My problem at the moment is that I couldn't have been playing better in practice but I'm not taking that on to the match court," he said. "It's a mental thing. I have to keep working. I still never doubt my own ability. I still know I've got all the shots but on the match court, I'm not using it. I'm making life difficult for myself."

Against Black, Henman let his chances go begging and allowed his opponent to dictate the pace and style of play. "I wouldn't say at the moment I am using my capabilities,"



Rafter, the No 3 seed, displays intense concentration during his second-round match against Ferreira, which he won in three hard sets.

Henman added. "I'm a better player than a lot of people on the Tour, but I have to learn how to use it. I have to understand how to use my strengths. I need a better game-plan.

"I feel like I've achieved a lot in the last few years but I still feel I have so much more to learn. When I was in Dubai and Antwerp, I think that was really the bottom of the pit because I was playing poorly. But now, although I'm not playing successfully, I'm not doing anything different from when I've played very well. I think this is probably the least enjoyable learning process."

There is little that anyone can teach Pete Sampras. He walked past Todd Martin, 6-1, 7-5, and into the third round. Had it not been for the late-afternoon sun getting in his eyes and the fact that Martin finally got to grips with his own service, it would have been over a lot sooner. He now faces Thomas Muster, who is working his way back to peak form and defeated Cedric Pioline 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

After his nine months away on sick leave, Steve Graf made her way into the second final with a straightforward 6-3, 6-0 win over Natasha Zvereva.

Andre Agassi or Sergi Bruguera. In the women's event, the State Farm Evert Cup, life seemed to be returning to normal when Venus Williams put a stop to Dominique Van Roost's run of success. So far this year, Van Roost has reached three finals, winning one of them.

Never one to give up the spotlight easily, Williams was having none of that. With a rattle of her beaded hair, she simply blew Van Roost away. Williams has only two tactics in any match - hit the ball exceedingly hard or absolutely leather it - but they seem to

serve her well. On Tuesday night, she chose the latter and eased through 6-4, 6-1. Conchita Martinez was also back in business, dealing capably with the precocious talent of Anna Kournikova. The young lady from Russia, by way of Florida, may be the player most people want to watch but Martinez is the one with a Wimbledon title. She handed Kournikova a simple lesson in taking the important points to win 6-3, 6-4.

After her nine months away on sick leave, Steve Graf made her way into the second final with a straightforward 6-3, 6-0 win over Natasha Zvereva.

Graf has conceded only eight games here this week and has yet to be beaten by Zvereva in 17 encounters. It seems like old times for Graf. British fans will not have to wait until Wimbledon to see the former world No 1 as she is due to play in the Direct Line Insurance tournament at Eastbourne in June.

Organisers of the grass-court event, a traditional warm-up for Wimbledon, yesterday announced a strong entry for this year's tournament, from June 16 to 20, which also includes Williams, Kournikova, Jana Novotna and Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario.

BADMINTON

Morgan lasts longest in survival test

By RICHARD EASTON

KELLY MORGAN, who had been obliged to leave Britain to finance her badminton career until awarded National Lottery funding, was the only British player to reach the third round of either singles event in the Yonex All-England Championships at the National Indoor Arena, in Birmingham, yesterday.

The 22-year-old from Cardiff went to Denmark and then to France, where clubs helped to fund her tournament schedule. She must have enjoyed a sense of vindication after her 11-4, 11-0 second-round victory over Law Pei Pei. Not only had she swept aside a young Malaysian who could be a Commonwealth Games medal-contender in her home city of Kuala Lumpur later in the year, but she had easily outlasted the challenge of the English players, who until recently were so much better off than her.

"Lottery money has helped a tremendous amount in improving my fitness and confidence, although I think everything in my game has improved," Morgan said, after ruing her opponent ragged with a telling combination of clears and drops. Later, Morgan became the last Briton to depart from the singles when, as expected, she lost to the No 1 seed, Gong Zhichao, of China. However, Morgan led 6-5 in the second game, attacking spiritedly before becoming ensnared by the defensive wiles of her right-footed opponent and losing 11-3, 11-7.

Darren Hall, England's best hope in the men's singles, lost a one-sided encounter 15-11, 15-1 to Wong-Chong Hamn, of Malaysia. Hall led 10-7 in the first but, with three errors at the net, usually one of his strongest areas, let his young opponent back into it. After that, the pace at which the fleet-footed left-hander

played proved far too much for Hall.

The last English player to go out was Mark Constable, whose excellent win over Kenneth Jonassen, of Denmark, on Tuesday was followed by a sobering 15-7, 15-3 defeat by another Malaysian, Rashid Sidek, who will be chasing a hat-trick of Commonwealth men's singles gold medals in September.

Jeanette Goodie lost at the eighth time of asking, the former All-England mixed

Table tennis player who had been obliged to qualify after taking a year out, played four matches on Monday, three on Tuesday and was yesterday beaten 15-7, 15-8 in the second round when she and Simon Archer had the misfortune to run into the No 1 seeds, Kim Dong Moon and Ra Kyung-Min, of South Korea.

Later, Goodie reached the second round of the women's doubles, when she and Donna Kellogg recovered from 11-5 down in the first game and 10-9 down in the second to beat Sara Sanjiv and Elli Miles, the English winners of the Scottish Open, 18-14, 15-12.

Later, Goodie reached the second round of the women's doubles, when she and Donna Kellogg recovered from 11-5 down in the first game and 10-9 down in the second to beat Sara Sanjiv and Elli Miles, the English winners of the Scottish Open, 18-14, 15-12.

SNOKER

McManus beats the clock

ALAN McMANUS, previously dormant as a realistic title challenger this season, roused himself to defeat Ronnie O'Sullivan 5-1 in the last 16 of the Thailand Masters here yesterday. It was an all-round exhibition of authentic quality.

"That's the best I've played in a very long time," McManus, who has not captured a title since triumphing at this event two years ago, said. "I've never lost my self-belief but, when you're accustomed to appearing in lots of finals and semi-finals and you start losing early on, it isn't fun."

McManus, also runner-up in 1992 and a vital part of the Scottish team that prevailed at the World Cup in Bangkok last season, has an ingenious approach to practice on his trips to the Far East. Making no attempt to overcome jet lag, he pots balls at night and sleeps during the day.

"We're seven hours ahead of Britain here and everyone's in a muddle," McManus said. "I can't sleep when the clock tells me I should so why not take

FROM PHIL YATES IN BANGKOK

advantage and practise when no one else is around? I even put in a couple of hours at five o'clock this morning."

The night shift has clearly been productive. Sharp from the outset, he capitalised on a number of safety errors from O'Sullivan to win the first two frames with breaks of 58 and 61 and, from 2-1, limited

O'Sullivan to an aggregate of only 13 points in the next two. O'Sullivan, attempting to become only the sixth player to win consecutive ranking events after his triumph at the Regal Scottish Open last month, opened the scoring in the sixth frame with a 61 break but there was to be no revival.

A run of 44 enabled McManus to force his way back in to contention before he potted the blue from distance to a half pocket and added pink and black.

O'Sullivan was downcast. "Alan was solid but I just didn't put him under any pressure. Even though I've been getting some positive results I haven't been playing particularly well. People think I'm being cocky but I don't give a damn. I know, deep down, that I'm struggling."

John Parrott reached his sixth quarter-final from nine tournament appearances when he defeated Stephen Lee 5-3. Parrott, who now meets Peter Ebdon, the title-holder, constructed breaks of 76, 125 and 67.

McManus: self-belief



BOWLS

Ireland warm to life in the fast lane

By DAVID RYNS JONES

IRELAND, who have never won the Hilton Trophy, surprisingly beat Wales in the opening match of the home international series in Swansea yesterday. The Welsh had laid on a quick surface, officially timed at 18.5 seconds, which was unfamiliar to their opponents.

"We have only three greens in Ireland," Eddie McNally, the team manager, said. "Two of them are slow, and the other reasonably quick, but nothing like this, which I would describe as flying."

McNally, who knew all about the Swansea carpet from previous visits, gathered his players at the Belfast club, where they practised to very short jacks. Clearly it was good preparation as they took to the quick surface like ducks to water.

The Irish took a firm grip from the start, moving ten shots ahead by the fifth end.

They stretched their lead to 68-38 by the halfway stage and remained around 30 points in front until the finish in win 124-91.

"We did well at home last winter and were pleased with our runners-up spot, but we have made some fine adjustments to fit old stalwarts like David Corkill and Jim Barker back in harness, we are looking to win the title for the first time."

Once they had found their range, Corkill's men revelled in the conditions, scoring 21 to Robert Weale's one between the sixth and fourteenth ends, when they turned a 4-10 deficit into a 25-11 advantage.

Mark Anstey, the new Welsh singles champion, skipped the Principality's only winning rink, edging home 17-16 against Neil Booth.

SQUASH

Duffield have top billing

By COLIN MCQUELLAN

A RESOUNDING 5-0 win by Duffield over Hallamshire in the last fixture of the season has carried the Derbyshire side to the top of Group A and into the semi-finals of the SRA National Squash League. They will now meet Chichester, the second-placed squad in Group B, and Potters Bar play Broxbourne, the Group B winners.

Finishing with a similarly comprehensive victory over IWC Cardiff, Broxbourne were the only undefeated side in the National League, although the two-legged semi-finals scheduled for March 24 and April 7 may threaten that achievement.

Potters Bar, long supported by the Hertfordshire arm of the Mitsubishi electric operation, have secured the title over the past two seasons mainly by dour resistance in such vital ties.

Duffield, also in the third year of a generous sponsorship - from Tamworth Street Motors - went to the wire with Potters Bar in last year's final and have strengthened

their squad this season. Jane Martin and Natalie Grainger are available for the women's string, in which Sue Wright, the British champion, has been a banker for the defending champions.

TSM Duffield also have an interest in the NSL Cup, for which National Squash League sides compete with the squads of the National Super

League. The last quarter-final in the knockout competition next Tuesday is a sell-out home fixture in Derbyshire against the Ellis Lingfield squad that last week fielded both Peter-Nicol, the world No 1, and Rodney Eyles, the world champion, to knock Maesteg off the top of the Super League table.

UNNET Surbiton this week defeated Halifax Insurance in the NSL Cup quarter-final. The other semi-final, on May 2 at Lingfield in Surrey, will be between ICL LionHearts, the defending NSL Cup holders, and Dunurwen Windows Maesteg.

Jansher Khan, of Pakistan, has pulled out of the defence of his Austrian Open title in Linz because of knee trouble. The knees the former world No 1 described as merely sore from training when he won the Super Series Finals in Hatfield last week have yet to recover. Jansher spent the week after Hatfield in London rather than travelling home to Pakistan but is still suffering from soreness.

DETAILS

Table with columns for Group A, Group B, and NSL Cup. Lists teams and their respective scores.

SNOW REPORTS

Table with columns for Location, Depth (cm), Conditions, Runs to resort, Weather (Sun/Cloud/Rain/Snow), Wind (km/h), and Last snow. Lists snow conditions for various UK locations.

FOR THE RECORD

Large table listing various sports events, dates, and results across multiple categories including Badminton, Bowls, Cycling, Football, Golf, Ice Hockey, Rugby Union, Snooker, and Table Tennis.

GOLF

Ballesteros back in contention at a stroke

FROM MEL WEBB IN AGADIR, MOROCCO

AFTER swimming against a tide that has long threatened to engulf him, Severiano Ballesteros believes that at last he has found a way to keep his head above water.

Ballesteros has made his best start to a season for years. He has appeared in two tournaments, in Dubai and Qatar, and is 16 under par for the eight rounds he has played.

Ballesteros has been a martyr to back trouble since the days of his lissom youth. Look at a picture of him from the 1970s, observe the huge inverted "C" that his back is describing in his follow-through, and know the reason why.

He has tried all sorts of remedies, including hanging upside down from door frames, having heated implements applied to his back and diverse other methods of self-inflicted torture.

swim since he was a boy. His problem, the potential no-trum having been diagnosed, was that he could only swim forwards, and that was no good at all.

His only recourse was to put himself in the hands of a coach, the master turned pupil for a change. Two lessons did the trick and Ballesteros took the plunge.

"Last year, when I was waking up, I was limping," he said. "This year, there is no problem." That is good news for those who believe that a healthy Ballesteros makes the PGA European Tour's heart beat more vibrantly.

He and the other 143 players here will have splendid tees, excellent bunkers and superlative greens on which to play in the coming four days, but the fairways are less good, the result of climatic problems in the past few months.

Great Britain aim to build on success of Olympic tournament



The United States team celebrate their victory in the Olympic ice hockey final which did much to boost the women's game. Photograph: Gary Hershorn

Women break through in new ice age

The Great Britain women's ice hockey team are not yet good enough to skate for gold, silver or bronze but the United States' victory over Canada at the Winter Olympics in Japan, has, at least, created a welcome burst of interest.

Anne Sheppard, 47, has been secretary to the women's leagues since 1990. She used to manage Bracknell and, up until last December, the Great Britain team.

Which is roughly the time it has taken for the US women players to quadruple in number to 23,000. As their gold medal-winners crown their success with a series of lucrative television adverts, the British players are nearing the end of another, unmitigated, domestic league season.

"It is a minority sport," Sheppard said. "Yet there are more players taking it up than ever before and we now have 20 league teams. One problem is that the personal expense is still very high."

SARAH POTTER



for more than a decade and now, with her Canadian husband, Mike, and Dowel Eason, coaches the Great Britain women.

said. "That makes it very difficult for the youngsters at school. The time is short because all rinks are run on a commercial basis. Whoever pays the most, gets the ice."

"Those girls that have gone through junior training programmes, and played alongside boys from the age of five upwards, are now the strongest players. It has made the standard much higher."

At first, some older players resented the change, but now it's just accepted. In some ways it makes the game more skilful and entertaining.

"They've all said they thought women's ice hockey would be like watching paint dry and couldn't believe it when the final was so entertaining. Our game is growing and I do believe we can get there."

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Almost every pair reached Six Diamonds on this hand from the English Pre-trial to select the teams for the Carnrose home international series. Incredibly, not one declarer managed to make the slam.

Bridge hand diagram showing cards for Dealer West and Love all IMPs. Includes a contract table at the bottom: Contract: Six Diamonds by South. Lead: ?

The above auction was typical. Three Diamonds showed a long suit with slam interest, and Four Clubs and Four Spades were cue-bids.

WORD WATCHING

- By Philip Howard
BRADSHAW
a. Pipe tobacco
b. To skive
c. A timetable
FAROL
a. A season ticket
b. A gullfighter's pass
c. A gambling game

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Oxford shine
In the Varsity match between Oxford and Cambridge Universities held over the weekend, Jonathan Rowson was awarded the prize for the best game by an Oxford player for the following win.

Chess game record for Jonathan Rowson vs Bryan Kelly. Includes Sicilian Defence and Catalan Opening moves.

Vladimir Kramnik failed to press home his claims to be a legitimate challenger for the world title. However, he did have the consolation of winning the following fine game.

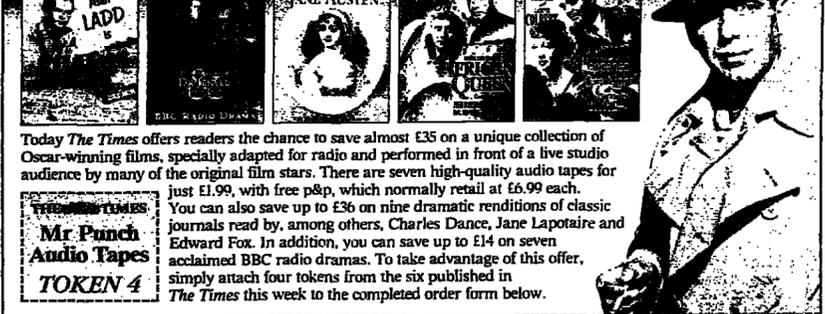
WIRING MOVE

By Raymond Keene
White to play. This position is from the game Jusic - Iosipovic, Zagreb, 1997. White's king has been chased into the open, but his centralised pieces and strong passed pawn now prove to be more relevant. How did he continue?

AN EXCLUSIVE OFFER THE TIMES

Hollywood Playhouse

Seven great audio titles: just £1.99 each



THE TIMES MR PUNCH AUDIO BOOKS ORDER FORM

Order form with fields for name, address, payment method, and a list of audio titles with checkboxes. Includes a 'TOTAL PAYABLE' field at the bottom.

BOXING

Local battle gives Neary chance to show class

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

SHEA NEARY may be a world champion, but the lightweight is little known outside Liverpool. This could be partly because his title is conferred by the World Boxing Union (WBU) - the latest addition to the alphabet men who run world championships - or that his explosive punch has received little television exposure.

Neary, unbeaten in 18 contests, is an exciting fighter, as his 15 wins inside the distance show. Technically, he appears to have world class, but this should be tested when he meets Andy Holligan at Stanley Park, Liverpool, tonight.

Neary has been trying to organise this contest since Neary won the title by out-punching Darryl Tyson in 1996. The experienced Tyson had been considered good enough to face Julio Cesar Chavez a few months beforehand.

Holligan, 29 like Neary, has been a professional for ten years against Neary's six, and challenged for the world title against Chavez in 1993. After his fifth-round defeat by the Mexican, he lost his British and Commonwealth titles to Ross Hale in 1994, but has since appeared to rediscover his form. He has won his past five contests, although he has not boxed for 11 months.

Despite this lack of recent action, the fierce rivalry of this contest will ensure that Holligan is in excellent shape for a bout that is unlikely to go the distance. Neary has the power to knock out Holligan, while the challenger has punching sharpness to exploit the champion's tendency to cut around the eyes. Neary should win in five rounds.

55:20 من الإجمالي

AN EXCLUSIVE COMPETITION

THE TIMES

WIN A FERRARI

Results of the Australian race appear tomorrow

ENTER THE BRAZILIAN RACE TODAY

Plus Grand Prix holidays to Australia and Monaco to be won



There is still plenty of time to enter Fantasy Formula One... competition which allows you to enjoy the thrills and spills of the grand prix season. Entry lines are open now to register for the Brazilian Grand Prix, the first of six races in the competition that carry up to 600 bonus points for correctly predicting any of the first three drivers to pass the finishing line. The winner of our Fantasy Formula One title will drive away at the end of the season in a Ferrari 328 GTS, valued at over £40,000. This dream machine has a top speed of 150mph and does 0-60 in 6.6 seconds. Second prize is a holiday for two to the 1999



THE PRIZES



STAR PRIZE The manager with the top score on our fantasy leaderboard after the final race of the season will win a Ferrari 328 GTS from Garage on the Green, Fulham, London SW6.

PRIZES of VIP trips for two to the 1999 Australian and Monaco Grands Prix will go to the two runners-up

INDIVIDUAL RACE WINNERS The manager of the team that scores the most points in each grand prix will win a pair of four-day passes, with centre transfer, for the 1998 or 1999 British Grands Prix, courtesy of Silverstone

Silverstone
For details of events at Silverstone call 01327 957273

MAKE THREE SELECTIONS FROM EACH OF THE FOUR GROUPS BELOW

 Damon Hill	 David Coulthard	 Jacques Villeneuve	 Michael Schumacher	 Eddie Irvine
GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	

FANTASY FORMULA ONE 24-HOUR ENTRY LINE: 0891 40 50 01
+44 990 100 311 outside the UK

0891 calls cost 50p per minute (standard tariffs apply to +44 990 calls)

THE SCORING SYSTEM

DRIVERS For each lap completed: 1 point. **Finishing position:** 1st 60 points; 2nd 50; 3rd 40; 4th 30; 5th 25; 6th 20; 7th 17; 8th 15; 9th 14; 10th 13; 11th 12; 12th 11; 13th 10; 14th 9; 15th 8; 16th 7; 17th 6; 18th 5; 19th 4; 20th 3. **Qualifying position:** Pole 30 points; 2nd 25; 3rd 24; 4th 23; 5th 22; 6th 21; 7th 20; 8th 19; 9th 18; 10th 17; 11th 16; 12th 15; 13th 14; 14th 13; 15th 12; 16th 11; 17th 10; 18th 9; 19th 8; 20th 7. **Improvement from starting grid to finishing position:** 3 points per place improved. **Fastest lap:** 10 points. **Penalty points:** Any incident resulting in a driver being made to start from the back of the grid or pit lane -10 points. Any incident resulting in elimination during a race -10 points. Not starting after qualifying for a race -10 points. **Speeding in pit lane -5 points. Black flag -20 points**

CONSTRUCTORS **Finishing position (first car only):** 1st 30 points; 2nd 25; 3rd 24; 4th 23; 5th 22; 6th 21; 7th 20; 8th 19; 9th 18; 10th 17; 11th 16; 12th 15; 13th 14; 14th 13; 15th 12; 16th 11; 17th 10; 18th 9; 19th 8; 20th 7. **Penalty points:** Any incident resulting in a car being made to start from the back of the grid or pit lane -10 points. Any incident resulting in elimination during a race -10 points. Not starting after qualifying for a race -10 points. **Speeding in pit lane -5 points**

BONUS POINTS apply to six grands prix during the 1998 Formula One championship, the first of which is the Brazilian Grand Prix. **Correctly predicting winning driver:** 100 points; second place: 200 points; third place: 300 points

TO ENTER BY PHONE

Readers in the UK and Republic of Ireland can enter by calling the 24-hour hotline on 0891 40 50 01 (+44 990 100 311 from Irish Republic). Calls last about seven minutes and must be made using a Touch-tone telephone (most telephones with * and # keys are Touch-tone).

Follow the instructions on the line and tap in your 12 two-digit selections in turn. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply. You will then be asked to give your Fantasy Formula One team name (maximum 16 characters), together with your own name, address, postcode and daytime telephone number (please note, you need to speak these details). You will receive a 10-digit PIN as confirmation of your entry. You can enter a team at any time until noon on Thursday, March 26, 1998 to qualify for the start of the Brazilian Grand Prix

TO ENTER BY POST

Complete the form, right, with your 12 two-digit selections. The order in which you register your first three drivers will be your predictions for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd finishing places for the grands prix where bonus points apply. To qualify for the start of the Brazilian Grand Prix, postal entries must be received by first post on Wednesday, March 25, 1998.

FF1 FAXBACK SERVICE

This service, available now, gives you a breakdown of how your team scored in last Sunday's Australian Grand Prix. Have your 10-digit PIN ready, pick up the handset on your fax and dial 0991 111 444.

Follow the instructions and press the appropriate buttons when asked. You will receive a score sheet detailing your race score, the scores for your drivers and constructors and your position on our leaderboard. If your fax does not have a handset, press the on-hook or telephone button instead. Calls cost £1 per minute and are available in the UK only. If you have any problems, call 0171-412 3795.

THE TIMES FANTASY FORMULA ONE ENTRY FORM

Complete this form with your credit-card details, or enclose a sterling cheque for £3 payable to Fantasy Formula One. For readers resident outside the UK or ROI the fee is £15. Post it to: **The Times Fantasy Formula One, Abacus House, Dudley Street, Luton LU1 1ZZ.** Your entry must be received by first post on Wednesday, March 25, 1998 to qualify for the Brazilian Grand Prix.

GROUP A AND GROUP B DRIVERS		Mr/Ms/Miss/Ms _____ Initials _____ Age _____
1st	2nd	Surname _____
3rd	4th	Address _____
5th	6th	Postcode _____ Day tel _____
7th	8th	Credit Card Payment: Card number: _____
9th	10th	Expiry date: <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/>
11th	12th	Team Name (maximum of 16 characters) _____
I have read and accept the rules and wish to enter the Fantasy Formula One game.		Name on card _____
Signature _____	Date _____	Supply address of registered cardholder on a separate sheet of paper if different from that above
1. On which days do you usually buy The Times? Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday <input type="checkbox"/> Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday <input type="checkbox"/>		3. Which National Sunday Newspaper(s) do you buy almost always (2-4 copies per month)? _____
2. Which other National Daily Newspaper(s) do you buy at least once a week? _____		4. Which National Sunday Newspaper(s) do you buy quite often (1-2 copies per month)? _____

If you would prefer not to receive information and offers from organizations carefully selected by The Times, please tick **TT**

RULES

1 Race results will be taken as those standing at midnight on the Sunday of each grand prix. Subsequent changes affecting those results, as decreed by the FIA, will be applied to Fantasy Formula One. 2 Changes of circumstances: if a driver is replaced for any reason you will be deemed to have chosen the new driver; if a driver transfers to another team you will keep first driver as your selection. 3 New drivers become available for transfer as and when they become participants in the Formula One season. 4 In the event of more than one entrant having the same score at the end of the competition a tie break will come into effect to decide the overall prize-winner. 5 In the event of more than one entrant having the same score for an individual race prize, the winner will be selected at random. 6 The computerised records of your entry will be considered to be the only, indisputable, final and no appeal will be made. 7 Prizes will only be awarded to teams which comprise three drivers from Group A, three drivers from Group B, three constructors from Group C and three constructors from Group D. 8 There is no limit to the number of teams a person may enter. 9 Telephone updates and transfers are made by Touch-tone (DTMF) telephones only. Entries should take approximately seven minutes and cost 50p per minute. Calls from payphones cost approximately double this price. 10 Promotional and explanatory copy relating to the Fantasy Formula One game forms part of the rules and conditions for participation. 11 Normal Times Newspaper circulation rules apply and the decision of the editor is final. 12 Entrants must be 18 years or over. 13 For inquiries call 01582 702 720, Mon-Fri, 9am to 5pm.

CHANGING TIMES

John Bryant trains with an Olympic gold medal-winner

Champion forever on the run

The stick-thin, ebony-black runner flitting through the bush with ridiculous economy and speed knows exactly what he wants and where he is going.



Thugwane sets the pace through the bush flanked by Bryant, right, and Peit before pausing, below, to recover breath.

He may have little English and no education, but Thugwane is a thoroughly professional athlete, consumed with split-times and sponsorship and what size bonus he might collect from Nike and Coca-Cola if he breaks the world record.

He drove us to his training camp himself. He drives like he runs, fast. Propped up on cushions like a jockey (he is only 5ft 2in), he peers over the wheel of his new and powerful four-by-four, baseball cap on his head, mobile phone at his side.



He prepares for his bid to win the Flora London Marathon on April 26 with a regime of total running at the Gannahock Game Park, where he shares a lodge with a couple of other world-class runners.

They run on flat, dirt roads, the surface fast but kind to the legs. They run at altitude. They run in the heat of a South African summer. And they run very fast.

Advertisement for Midland DIRECT Personal Investment Plan (PEP). The ad features a large image of a person's face and the text: 'The tax benefits of many expertly managed PEPs have always come at a high price. Until now.' It lists various investment options and contact information.

TELEVISION CHOICE

If only it was Ramsay Street

Neighbours From Hell II, ITV, 8.30pm. Previous programmes about awful neighbours, both here and on the BBC, have attracted such large audiences that you cannot blame the schedulers for wanting more of a good thing.



Suchet and James (ITV, 9.00pm)

Suchet and James (ITV, 9.00pm). The Prices live in well-heeled containment in north London. Morris (David Suchet) has made his money selling security equipment while his wife (Catherine James) is an interior designer.

confronted by a furious female guest who not only calls him a bastard but douses him in water? Nor can there be many weddings at which the newlyweds have a stand-up fight at the reception while the guests are kept behind a locked door.

Real Women, BBC1, 9.30pm. A wedding is a wonderful vehicle for drama - Robert Altman based an entire film on one - and the final part of Susan Oudot's drama has all the expected angles while adding a few less predictable ones.

Having It All: You, Me and the Baby, BBC2, 9.30pm. A film which follows four couples as they become parents for the first time contains the expected ingredients and a few surprising ones.

Paul Jones, Radio 2, 8.00pm. One of the several strengths of Jones as a music presenter is that his rhythm and blues leanings are by no means narrowly confined to established artists who sometimes wear the label of R'n'B somewhat defiantly.

Night Waves, Radio 3, 10.45pm. Aubrey Beardsley died of TB at the age of 25 and this year is the centenary of his death.

6.30am Ken Greening and Zoh Bel 8.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Johnnie Walker 1.30pm Debbie Trovati 5.00 Ed Stewart 5.30 John Dunn 7.00 David Allen's Country Club 8.00 Paul Jones. See Choice 8.00 The Detective Williams Show 8.30 The Gill Ryan Jones Show 10.00 Comedy Showcase 10.30 Richard Attenborough 12.00am Steve Moulden 3.00 Ayles Be...

6.00am Newsday 6.30 Europe Today 7.00 News 7.15 On the Shelf: At and Argyle 7.30 Composer of the Month 8.00 News 8.30 Pales for Thought 8.15 Performance 8.30 World Ranking 8.30 News: News in Games (8.45-9.00) 9.00 Sports Business Report 9.15 News 9.30 News 9.45 Newsday 10.00 Newsday 10.30 Discovery 11.00 Newsday 11.30 The Learning World: 11.45 From Our Own Correspondent 12.00 News 12.05pm World Business Report 12.15 Britain Today 12.20 News 12.25 Newsday 12.30 Newsday 12.35 Newsday 12.40 Newsday 12.45 Newsday 12.50 Newsday 12.55 Newsday 1.00 Newsday 1.05 Newsday 1.10 Newsday 1.15 Newsday 1.20 Newsday 1.25 Newsday 1.30 Newsday 1.35 Newsday 1.40 Newsday 1.45 Newsday 1.50 Newsday 1.55 Newsday 2.00 Newsday 2.05 Newsday 2.10 Newsday 2.15 Newsday 2.20 Newsday 2.25 Newsday 2.30 Newsday 2.35 Newsday 2.40 Newsday 2.45 Newsday 2.50 Newsday 2.55 Newsday 3.00 Newsday 3.05 Newsday 3.10 Newsday 3.15 Newsday 3.20 Newsday 3.25 Newsday 3.30 Newsday 3.35 Newsday 3.40 Newsday 3.45 Newsday 3.50 Newsday 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GOLF 47
Ballesteros in the mood for African adventure

SPORT

RUGBY UNION 49
Evans brings down the curtain on international career



THURSDAY MARCH 12 1998

Future of England captain as well as series at stake in Bridgetown

Atherton faces his toughest test

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
IN BRIDGETOWN
BARBADOS

MORE than a Test match, more even than a series is at stake over the coming five days at Kensington Oval. The outcome of the fifth Test will frame popular opinion on the theory of a progressive England team. It will also provoke emotive judgment on Michael Atherton's time as captain and whether it must now end.

Cricketer matches come no more momentous than this. In the chaotic confines of the Bridgetown ground, the faces and voices among the capacity 11,000 crowd this morning will be predominantly English. With such an army of travelling support, it is a unique Test for England, almost a home game on tour, but also a landmark match that they cannot contemplate losing.

The advances made within the England side will count for nothing if a third defeat costs them the series. The masses

Untroubled Thorpe 49

will inspect the gains of Atherton's leadership, find them materially thin and demand his head.

Atherton is wise to the possibilities. He has spent much of his captaincy listening to the shrill sharpening of knives, so the experience is not new to him. There is a definitive air to the coming week, however. Victory would revive the prospect of a glorious chapter in his volatile story. Defeat would close the book.

People of power or authority are frequently admired more by the detached public than by those who work closest to them. With Atherton, the opposite applies. For all his longevity, he has neither sought nor achieved a broad affection, yet in and around the England team he commands a rare, unwavering loyalty, expressed more than once by pleas to stay in charge. Lose again, though, and he is likely to turn a deaf ear.

He is one of those contradictory types: a natural leader who is not cut out to be a public figure. He has no pretensions, no artifice, which does him both credit and harm. He will never answer the clamour for a people's captain, oozing charisma and affection.

It was this way yesterday. Atherton had no wish to be drawn on the personal significance of this match, nor on the make-up of his team. He was blunt and unglamorous; himself, with knobs on. But he did sum up the prospects in a single



England supporters watch a practice session yesterday. They will make up the majority of the crowd at Kensington Oval and hope to celebrate victory at the end of the fifth Test.

phrase. "This is the crunch match," he said quietly. "When we won here four years ago, the series was already lost. This is a bigger game because it remains very much open. It is a test of a good team to perform to their maximum when they really need to, as we do now."

Atherton and his fellow selectors were convening last night to debate the simple options open to them. The batting, though thus far disappointing, will be unchanged from the defeat in Guyana. Caddick will return as third seam bowler, imposing a choice between the two spin bowlers, Croft and Tufnell.

On form, Croft would be most unfortunate to be excluded, but a residue of faith in Tufnell is evident and the probable replacement of the left-handed Adams with the right-handed Holder in West Indies' middle order will also count in his favour. The familiar wicketkeeping debate, it seems, is being conducted by the uninvolved rather than the management. Atherton appeared to discount the omission of Russell by saying: "It would be a big risk in two ways. Alec [Stewart] has not kept at all on tour and there would be a danger of messing up his batting, which is one of our strengths."

Here, at all places, Stewart should be left to concentrate on opening. In the 1994 victory, he famously made a century in each innings and, yesterday, he said: "If I was to describe my ideal pitch to bat on, this would not be far off it. It has decent pace, even bounce and not too much sideways movement. It will be the first proper Test wicket we have played on in the series."

This does not persuade either Stewart or Atherton that a draw is the likeliest result: "I would be surprised if that happened, unless it rains for a couple of days," Stewart said. "The way the cricket has been played, I'm confident there will be another positive result," Atherton said. Indeed, Bridgetown has not

staged a draw in 21 years. Ambrose and Walsh will find bounce aplenty with the new ball if England should bat first, but Angus Fraser showed four years ago, by taking eight for 75, that height and pace are not everything on this pitch. The inclination of successive captains has been to bowl first, then regret it. Since 1986, the team winning the toss here has inserted in ten matches out of 11, but in seven of them, the move has resulted in defeat. Atherton will want to win the toss and, in all probability, bat first. "The new ball is the key," he said. "In the first session, the ball does bounce more. Get

through that and you've got decent conditions." He needs some luck. He badly needs to win. If it all goes wrong, the largest English contingent to gather for any overseas Test will find they are watching his penultimate match as captain.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD
No 1351
ACROSS: 4 Road up to house (5) 7 Roof-reeder (8) 8 Barrie's pirate, boxer's punch (4) 9 Jean Jacques —, Confessions author (8) 10 Quick look (6) 13 Desperate food shortage (6) 14 Have for choice (6) 15 Home (lymbol); bottom of furnace (6) 18 Most astounding, beautiful (8) 19 Hawk; influence (4) 20 Final (8) 21 Use broom; old chimney dimber (5)
DOWN: 1 Gentle walk (6) 2 Philip —, poet, was Hull librarian (6) 3 Accumulate (eg interest) (6) 4 Horse obedience training (8) 5 Lower; worse (8) 6 Pardon; reason (6) 11 Sufficient (8) 12 Mops; scoops the pool (6,2) 14 Fish star-sign (6) 15 Scots offal dish (6) 16 Attraction; request to em-pire (6) 17 Bank cashier (6)

Venables likely to accept Palace job

BY RUSSELL KEMPSON
TERRY VENABLES is likely to accept an offer to become the Crystal Palace coach. Though the obstacle of his position with the Australia national side has yet to be resolved, it is believed that Soccer Australia, the country's governing body, will not stand in his way if he decides to join Palace, the struggling FA Carling Premiership club. However, the attempt by Mark Goldberg, Palace's prospective new owner, to secure Venables on a long-term contract may prove less successful. As a possible condition of releasing Venables from his contract, which runs out in July, Soccer Australia would want to re-employ him in time for the qualifying stage of the 2002 World Cup. Whether an agreement can be reached would also influence the likelihood of Paul Gascoigne joining Palace after Rangers accepted a £3 million bid this week. "I think we will want to know who the next manager is before we can actually focus very clearly on Palace's offer," Mel Stein, Gascoigne's adviser, said yesterday. David Hill, the chairman of Soccer Australia, said: "I have been in close contact with Terry regularly. Understandably, he is in a bit of a quandary. We want him to continue with us as coach, but we also appreciate his value is way beyond our resources. "He is torn by his loyalty to us but, much as we want to keep him, he owes it to himself and his family to consider other options. While we have a tremendous relationship with him, he should not allow that to sway what could be a sensible career decision."



Venables: quandary

Havelange backs bid by England

BY JOHN GOODBOY
ENGLAND'S bid to stage the 2006 World Cup yesterday received the unexpected backing of the president of Fifa, the world governing body of football. Joao Havelange held discussions with Tony Blair in London and afterwards said that it was his "personal wish" for England to be the venue 40 years after winning the tournament on home soil in 1966. Havelange, who was speaking outside 10 Downing Street, had a 45-minute meeting with the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, the Minister for Sport and officials of the Football Association. However, Havelange, 62, is retiring this year after 24 years as president of Fifa and will not have a vote in 2000, when the venue is decided by the 24-man Fifa executive committee. Germany and South Africa are the other declared candidates. Graham Kelly, the FA chief executive, said: "Dr Havelange is very influential in international football. His support is very welcome indeed." Banks added: "We are very, very encouraged by this endorsement. I think those people who thought the bid was not serious will now reverse their assessment." Havelange, who has always enjoyed support in Third World countries, said that the reason he was supporting England's candidature was that it had last staged the tournament in 1966. Germany has held the tournament more recently, in 1974. He added that he wanted his native country of Brazil to host the 2010 World Cup, 60 years after it last staged the tournament.

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